VIZ Signature

PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Vagabond

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 24

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 24

VIZ Signature Edition

Story & Art by
Takehiko Inoue
Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
VAGABOND is rated M for Mature and is recommended for mature readers. This volume contains graphic violence.

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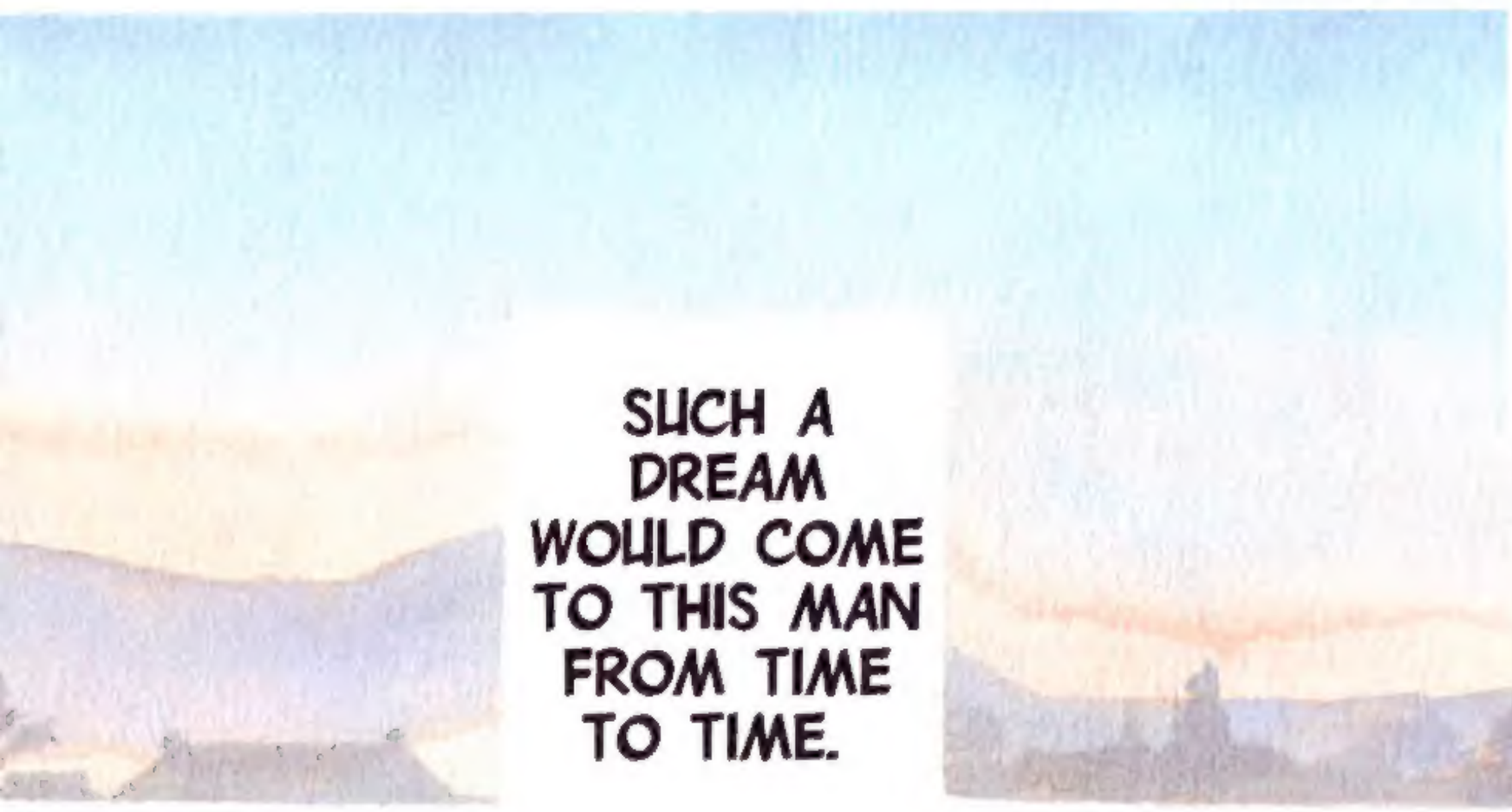
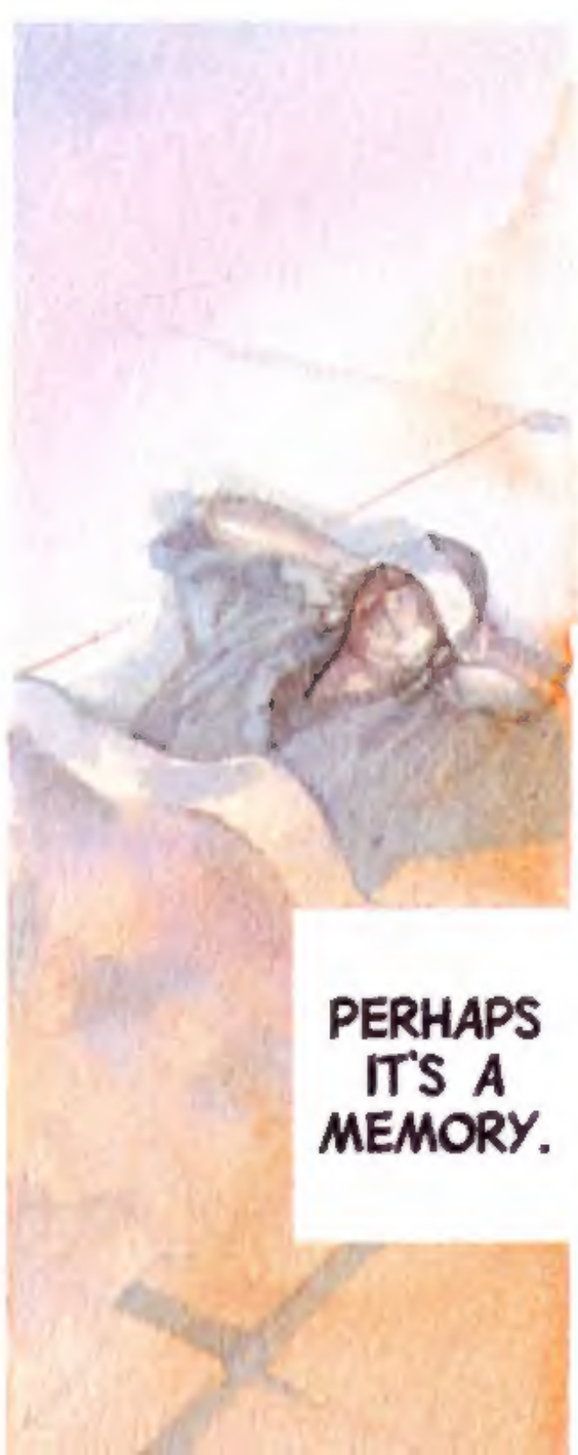
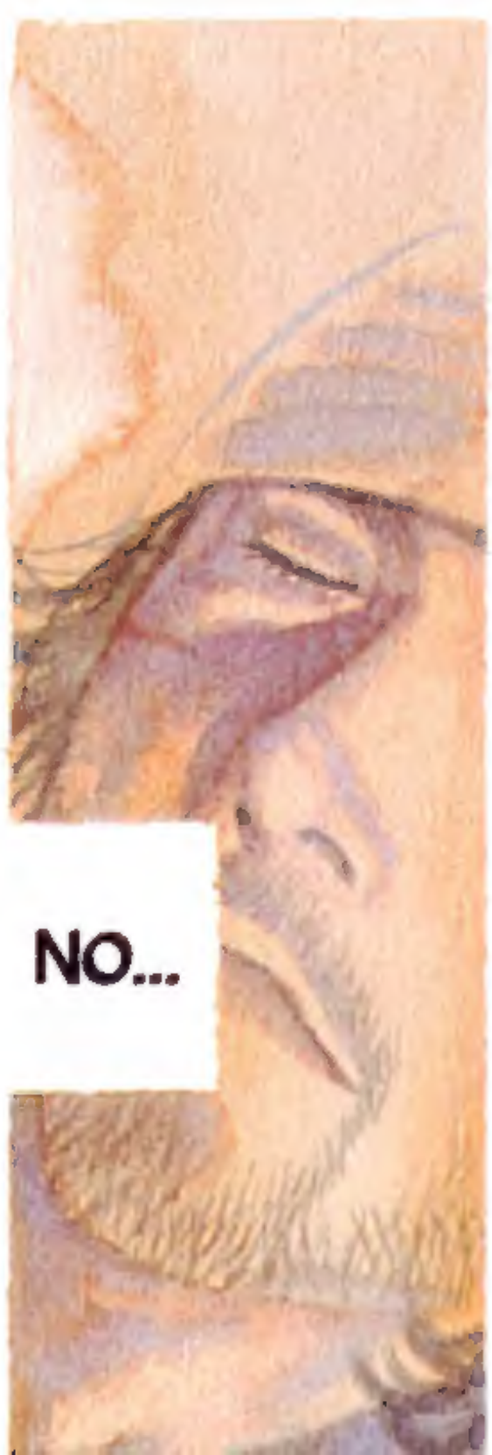
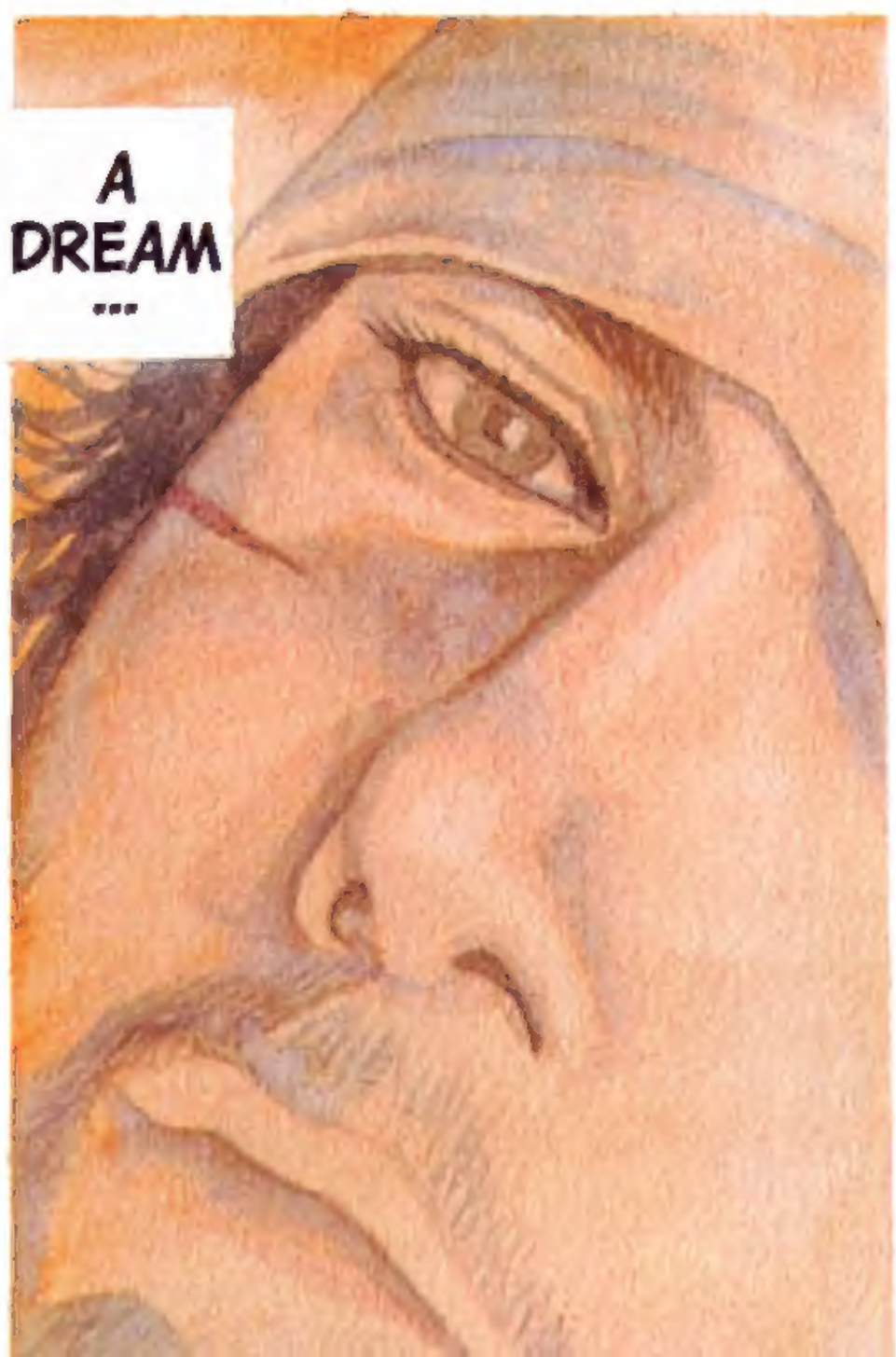

SUCH A DREAM WOULD COME TO THIS MAN FROM TIME TO TIME.
IF ONLY THINGS WOULD STOP FOR A WHILE...

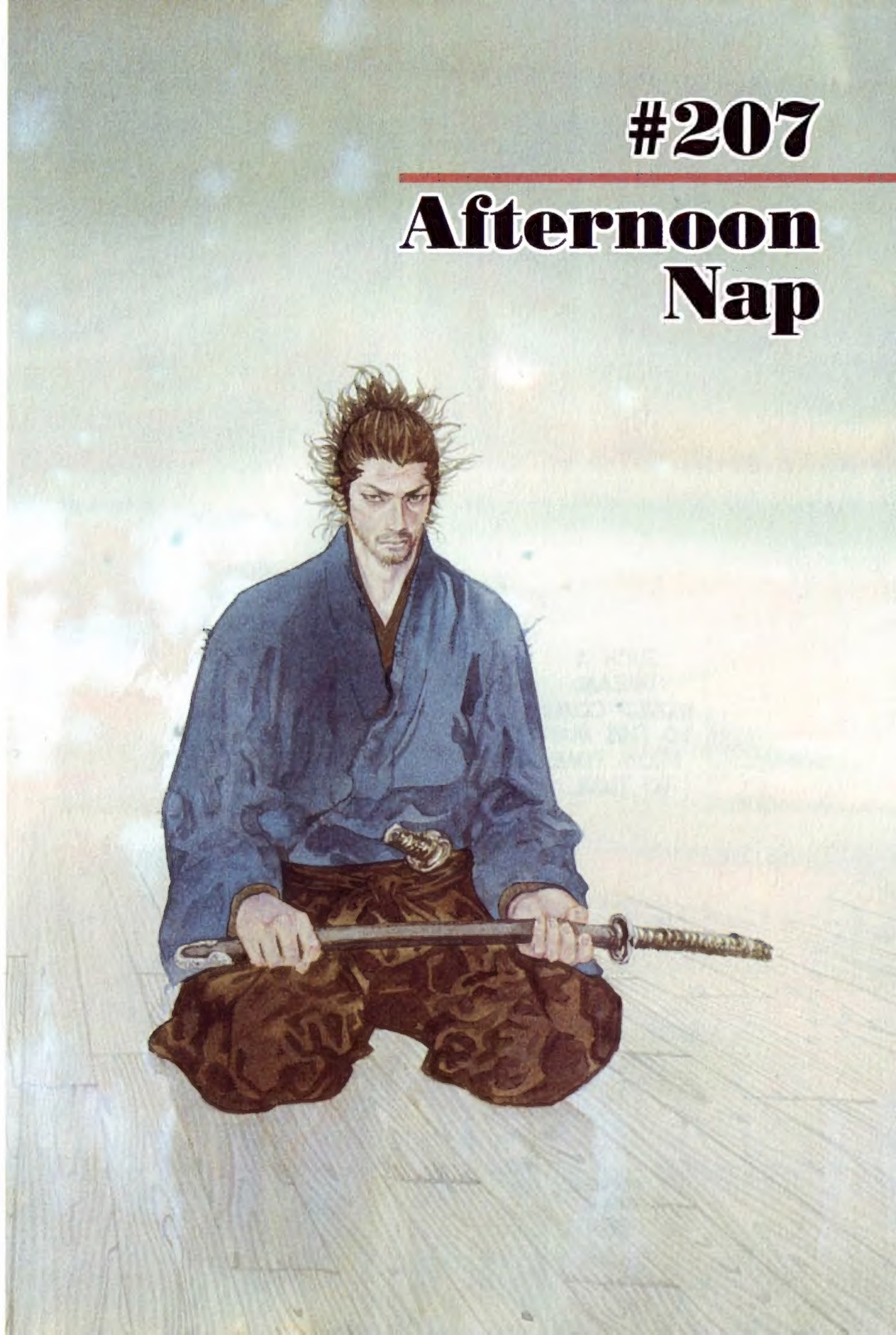

PERHAPS IT'S A MEMORY.


NO...


A DREAM ...

#207

Afternoon Nap



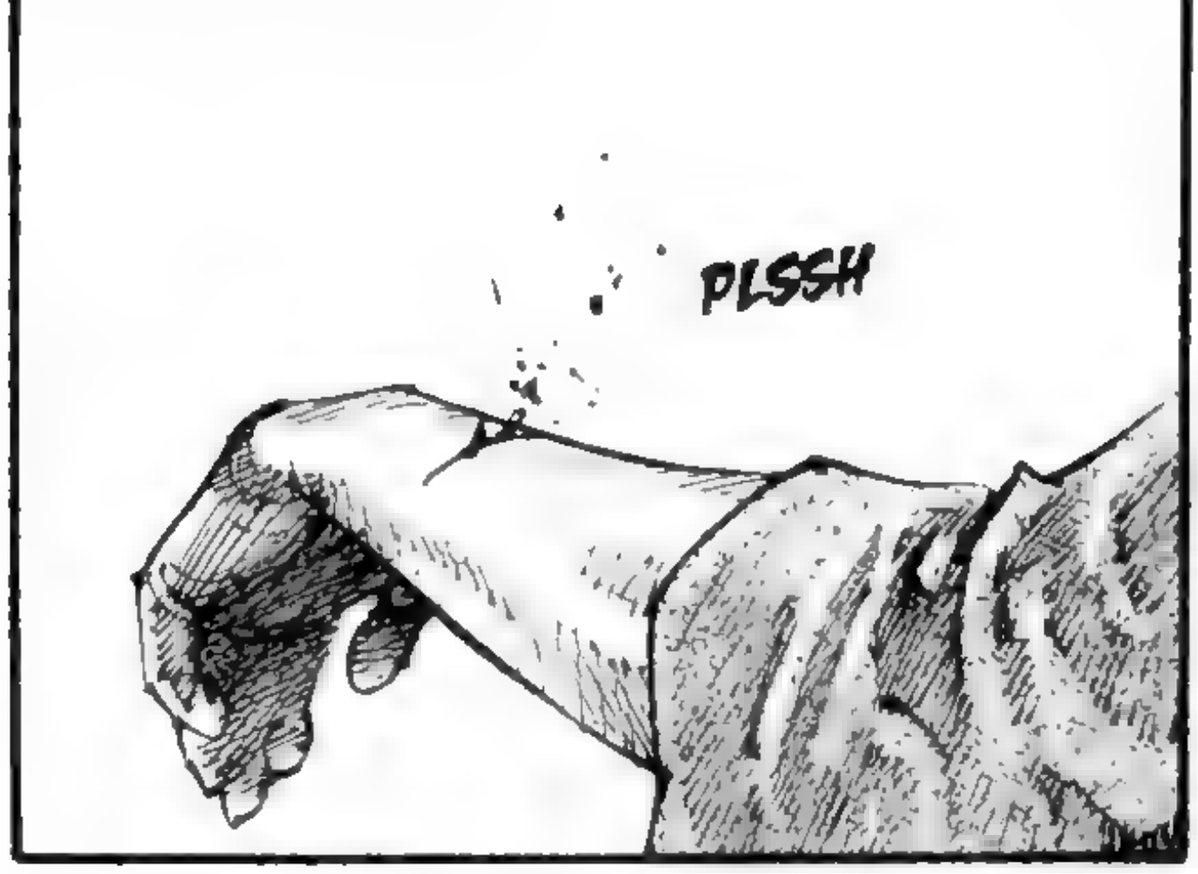
TWEEET
TOOT TOOT
DON
DODON
DON
DODON

THE REMAINS OF A SAMURAI ...?

YAHHH!!

DON DODON DODON DON

CAN'T BE.
OUCH
HUF
HUF
THAT'S NOT RIGHT.
F
S
S
H
H


PLSSH

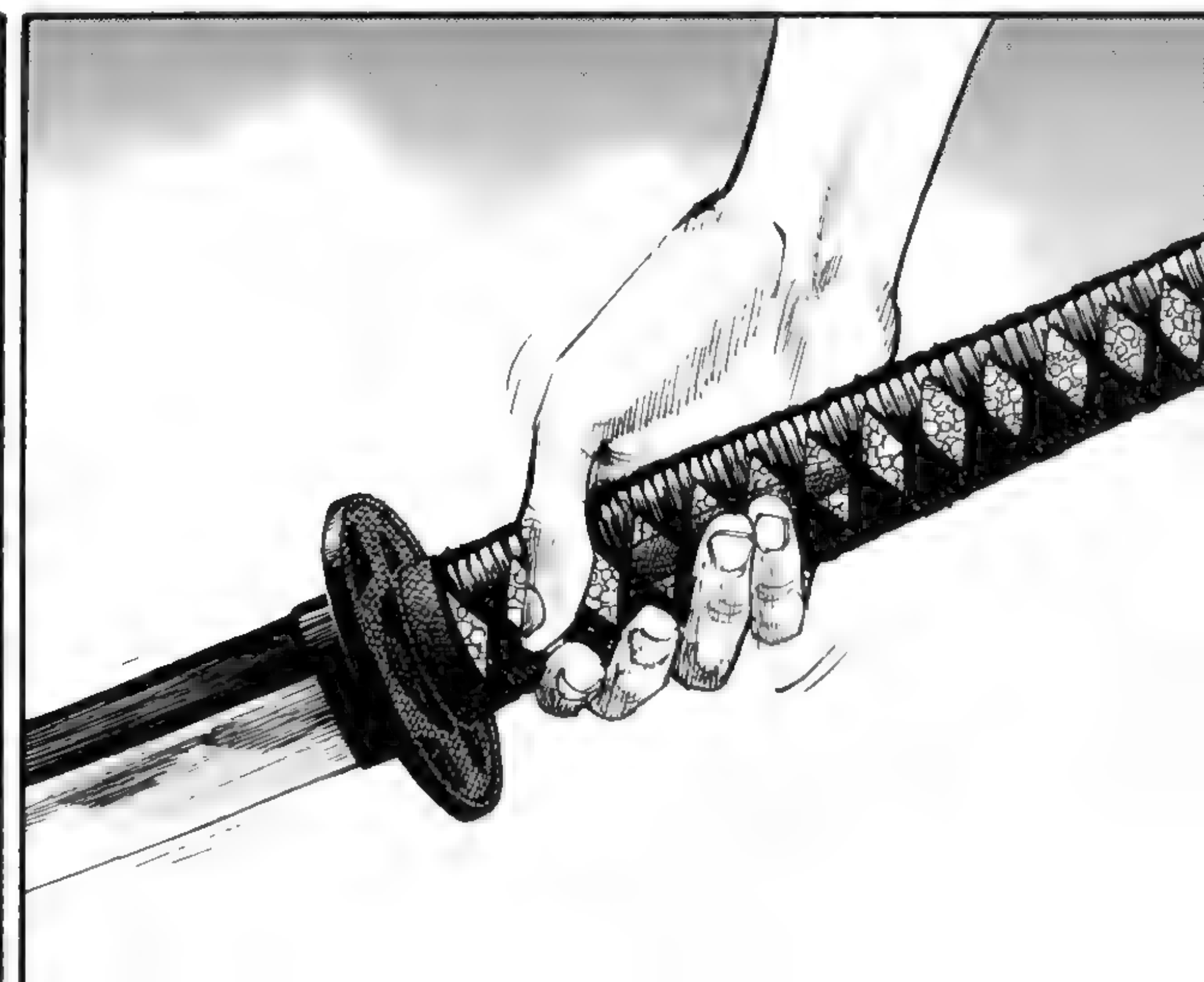
SHNK

...

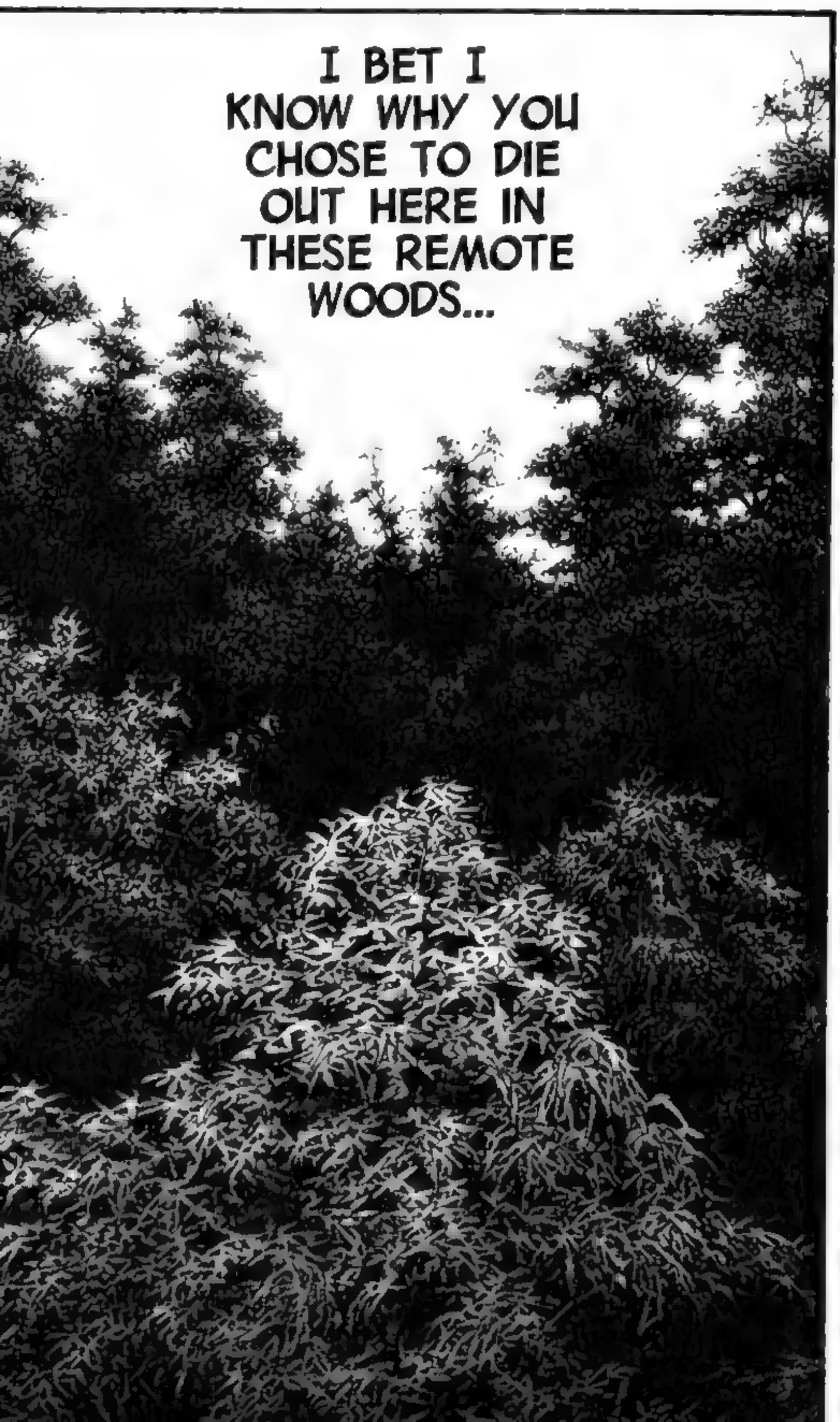
HAAAA

HYUUU

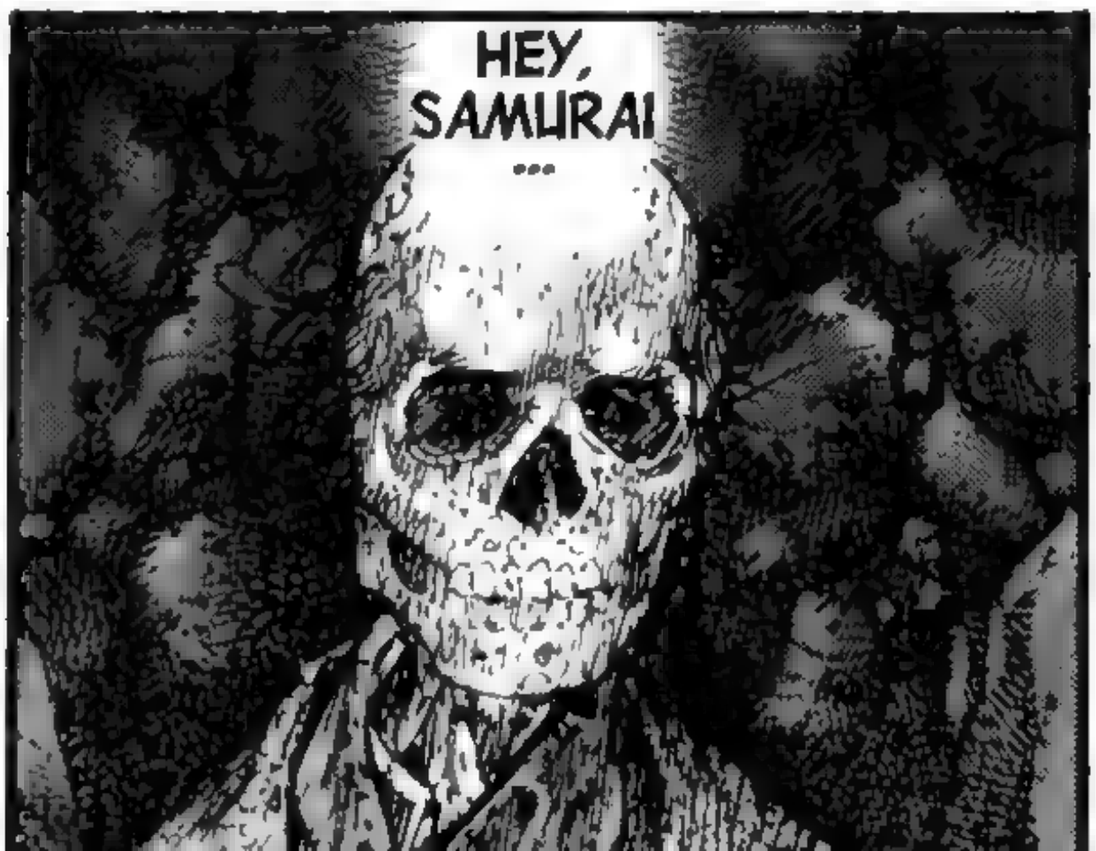
FIP



PLISSSH


I BET I KNOW WHY YOU CHOSE TO DIE OUT HERE IN THESE REMOTE WOODS...

HEH...


HEY, SAMURAI ...

I DON'T NEED A TEACHER.

I'LL BECOME ONE WITH THE MOUNTAIN.

THAT WAY...

MY SOUL WILL BECOME ONE WITH THE MOUNTAIN.

I SEE...IT'S MORE LIKE THIS.

MOVE THAT WAY...

I SEE.

THAT'S RIGHT, AND BACK AGAIN.

LIKE THIS...

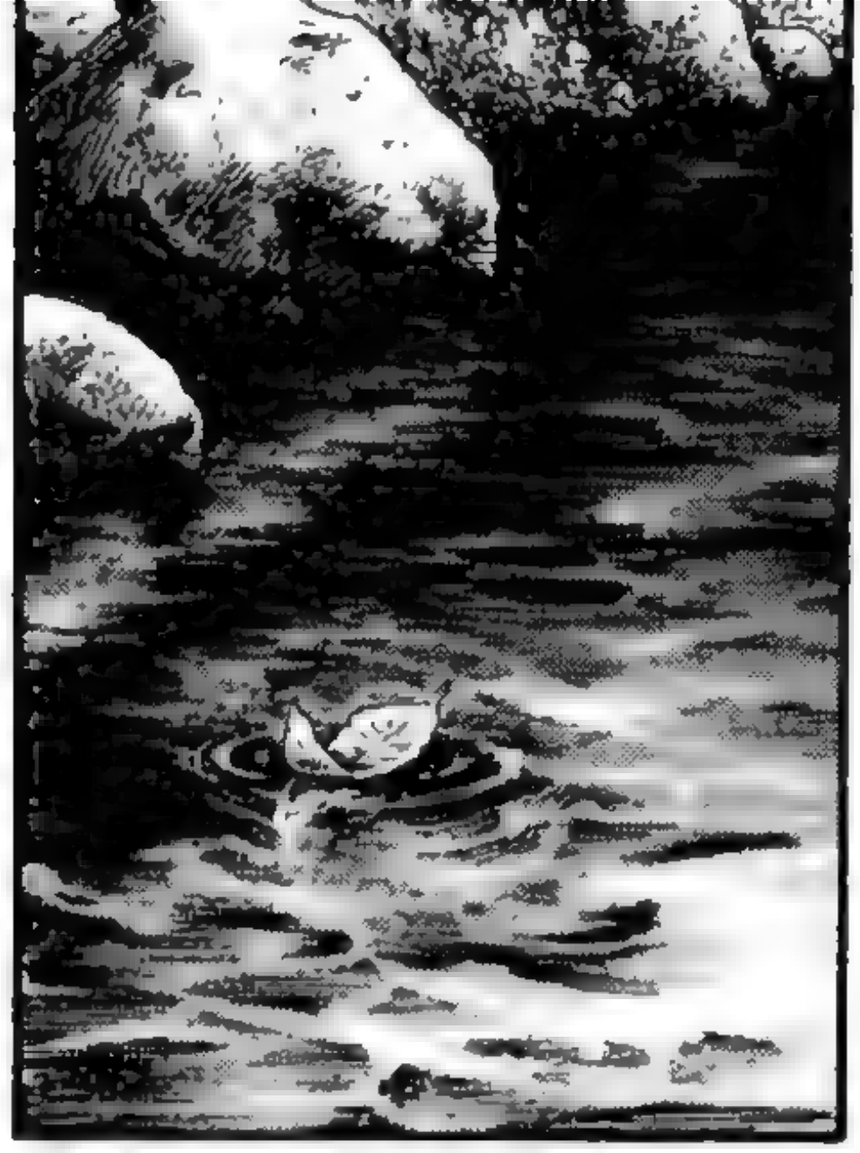
YES...

LIKE THIS.

I DON'T NEED A TEACHER...
...TO TELL ME HOW TO STRIKE, HOW TO CUT PEOPLE DOWN...

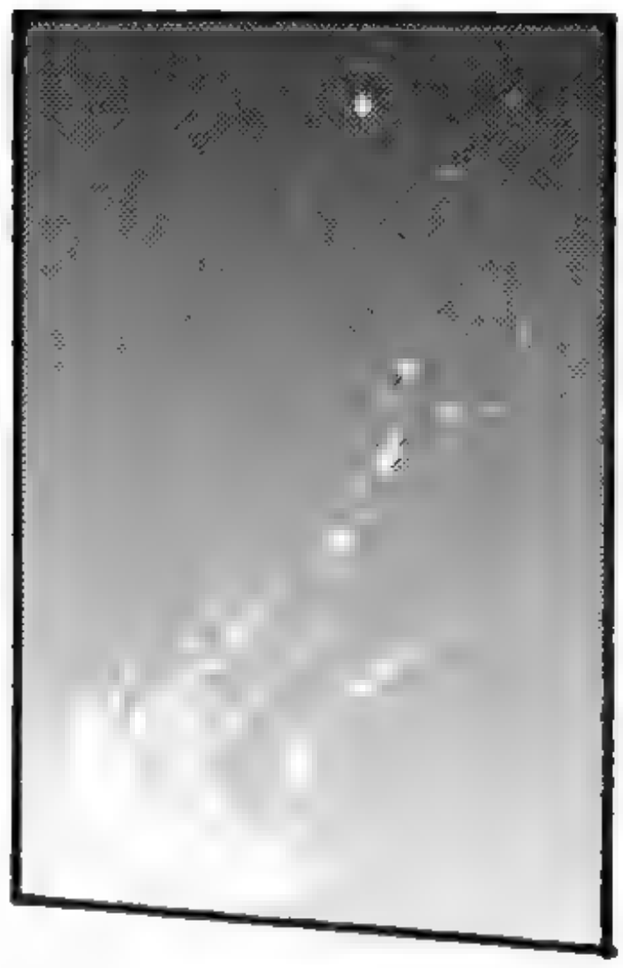
IT'S ALL THE SAME.
THE SWORD WILL SHOW ME THE WAY.

FSSSHH



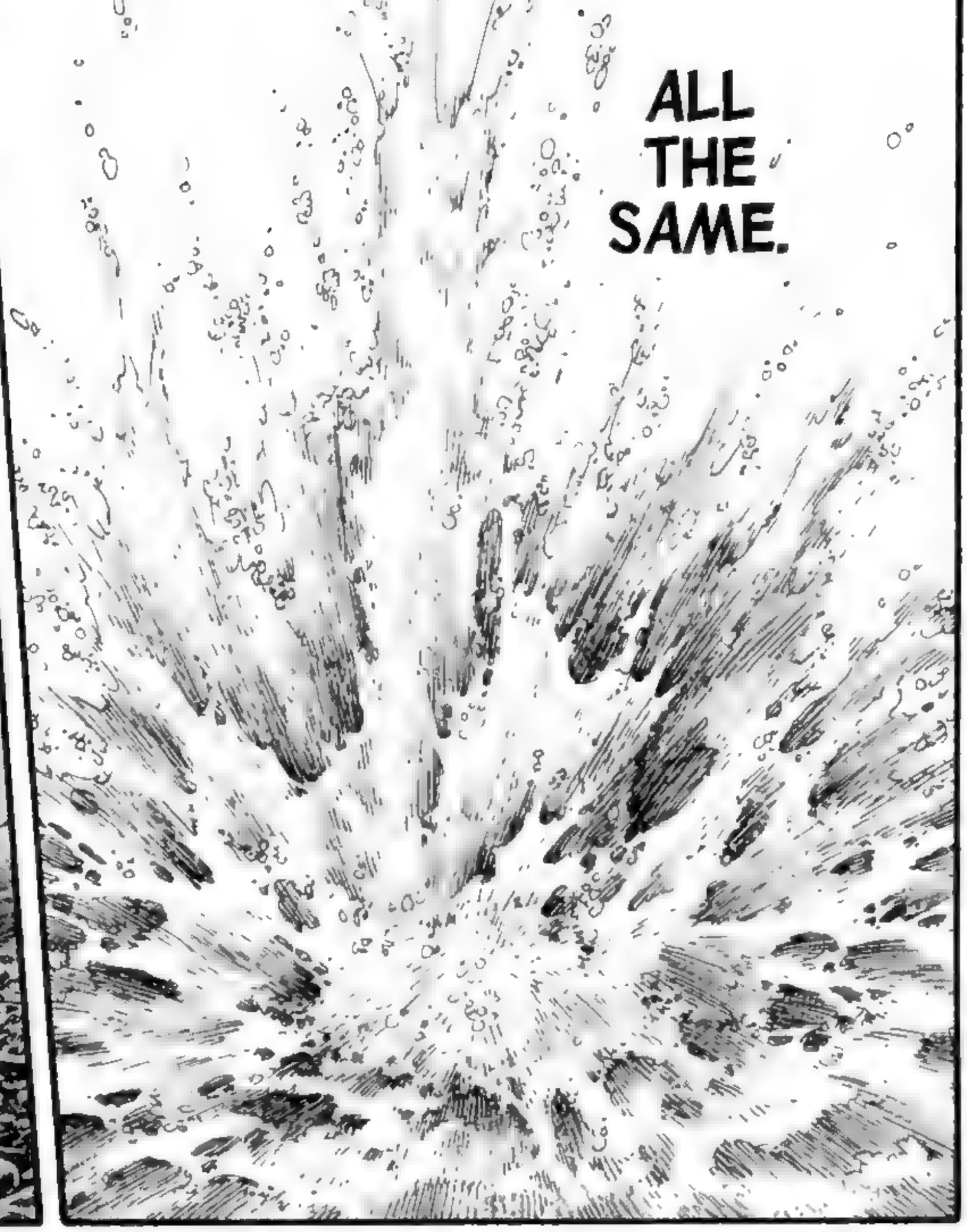
THE WIND.

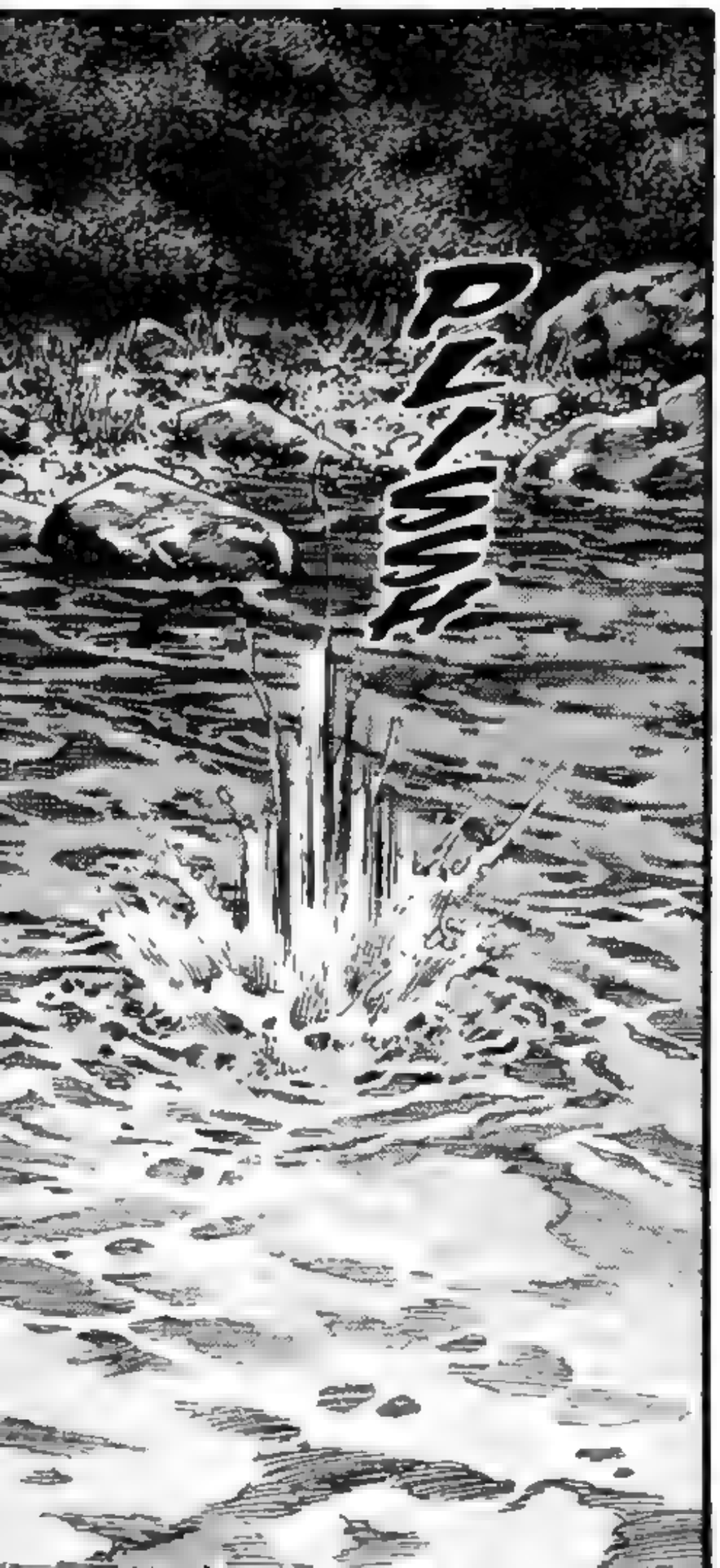
THE TREES.



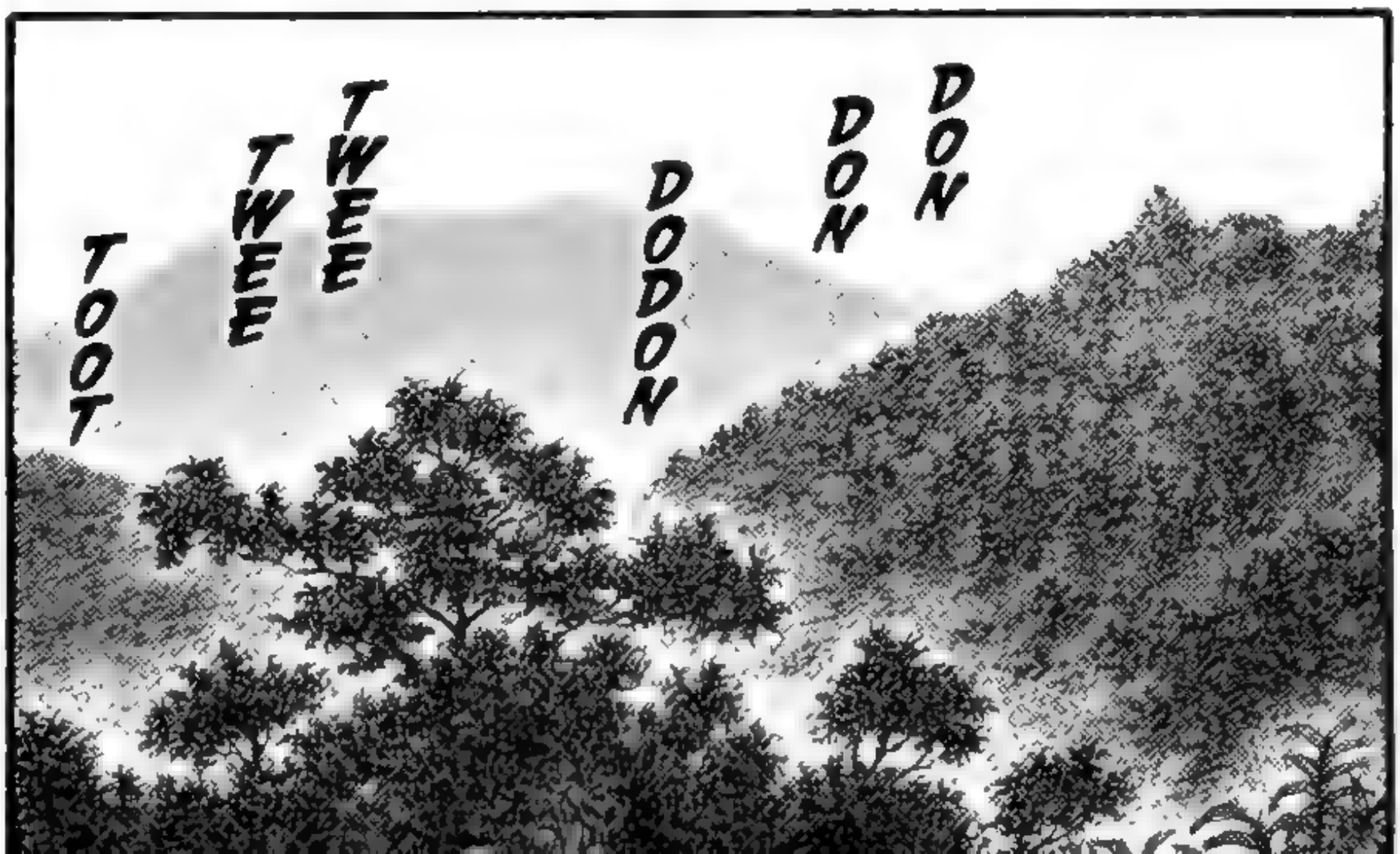
THE WATER.

EVEN ME.


ALL THE SAME.


PLISH

SPLSSH


TOOT
TWEE
TWEE
DODON
DODON
DODON

ALL
IS
ONE.

GIBB
GIBB
ZIBB
ZIBB

TWEE TWEE

ZWRR ZWRR ZWRR ZWRR ZWRR

TWEE TWEE

DON

DON

DON

HUF

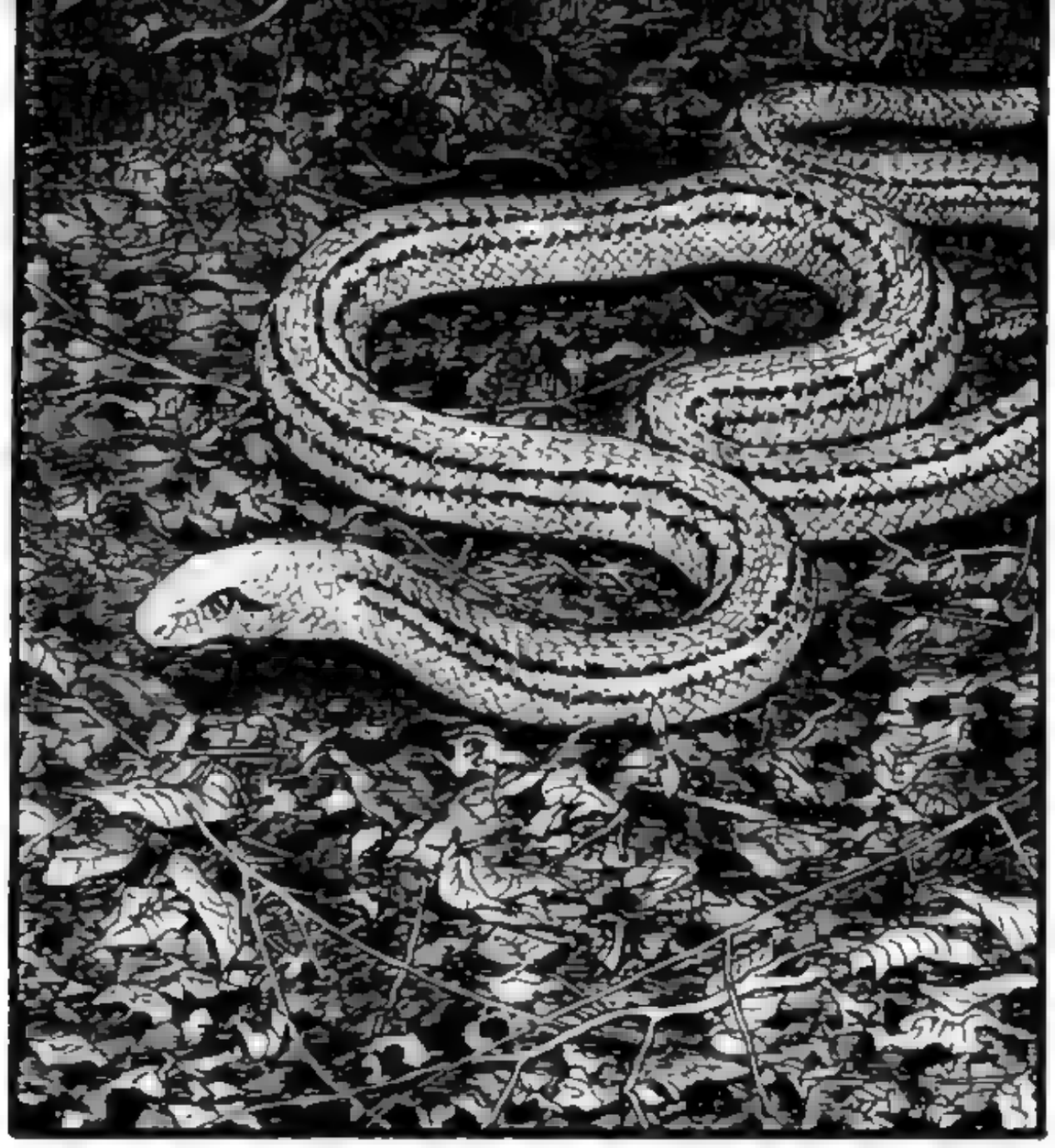
HUF

HUF

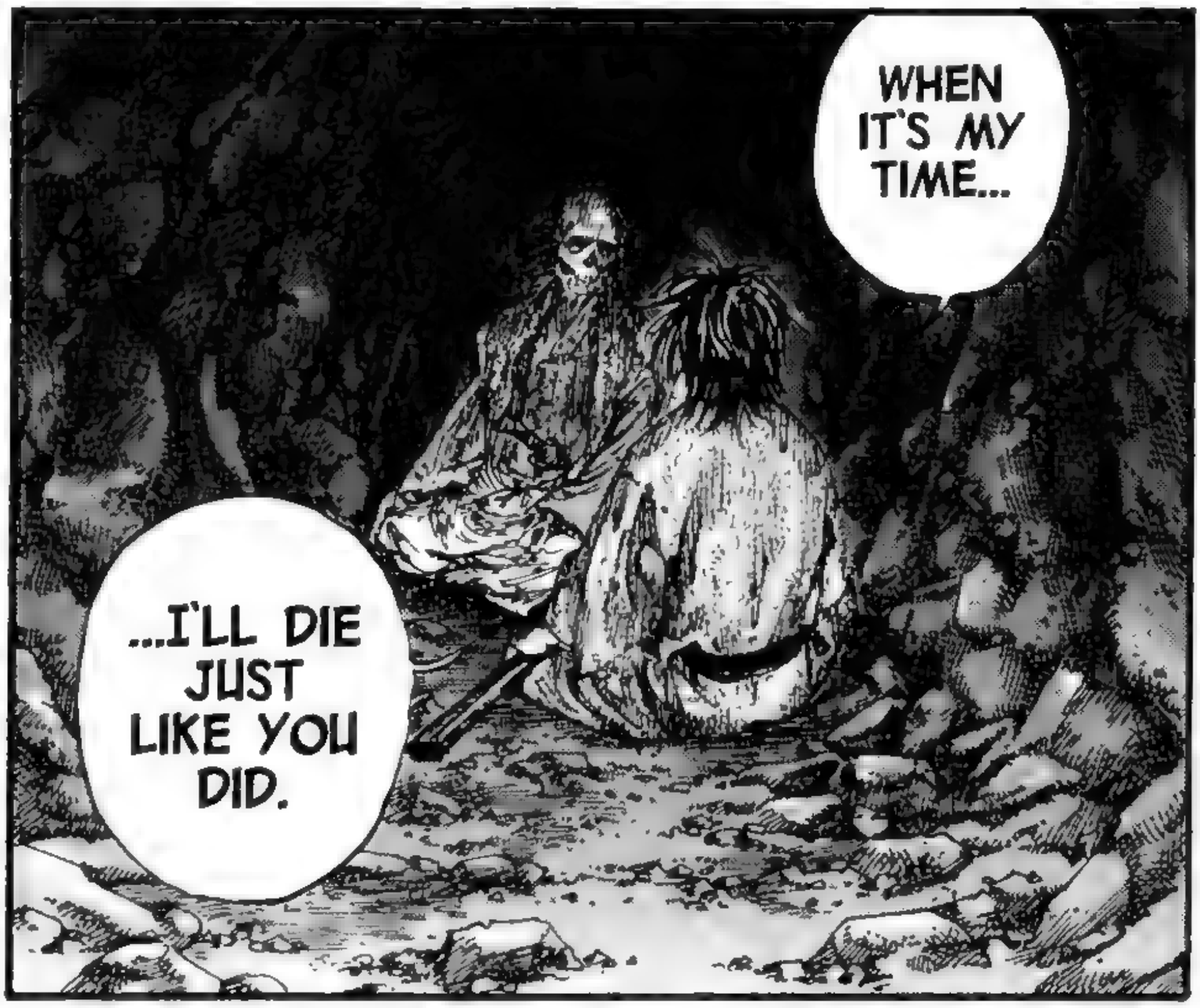
SPLSH

SPLSH

ZWRR ZWRR ZWRR ZWRR



I'LL BE BACK.

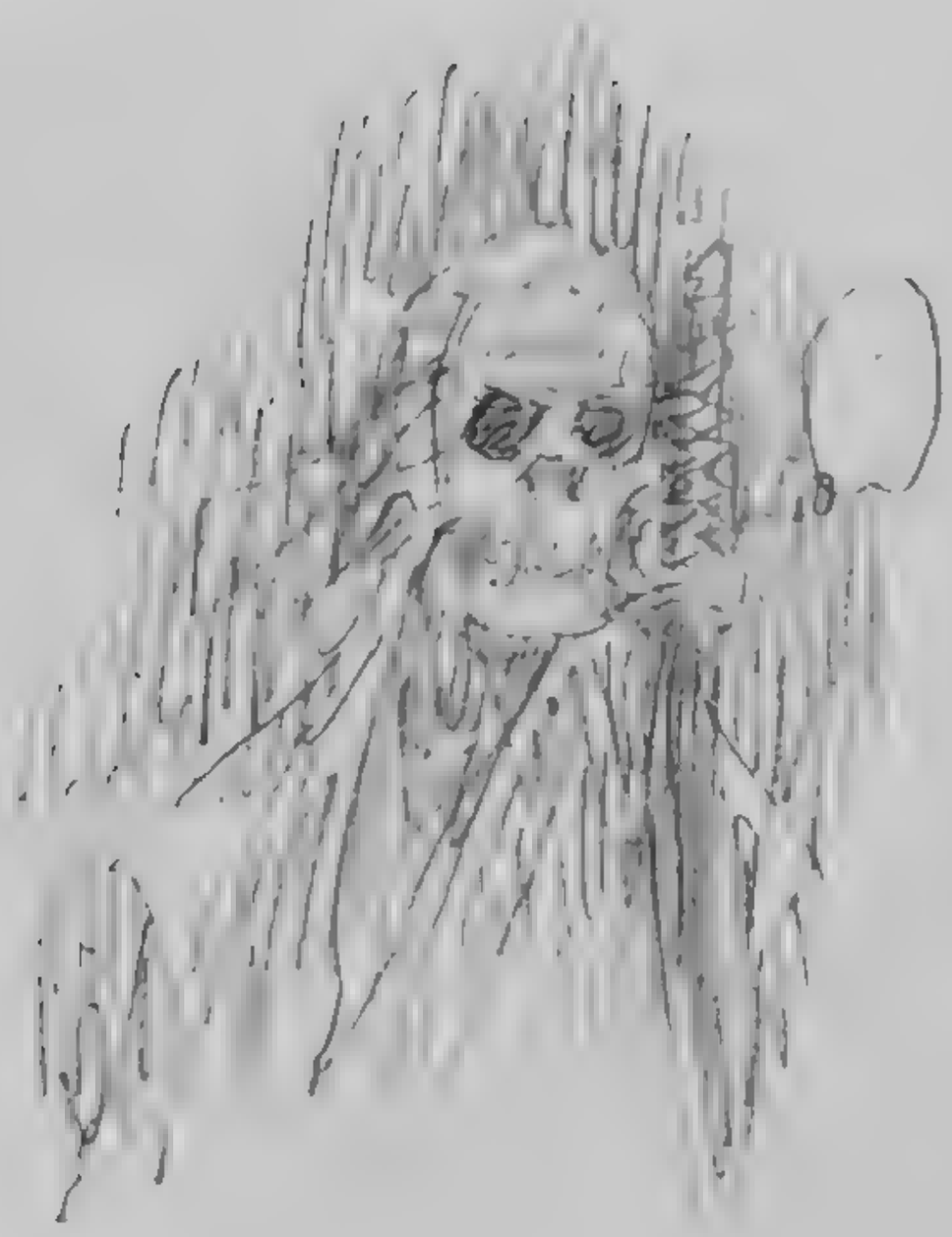

WHEN IT'S MY TIME...
...I'LL DIE JUST LIKE YOU DID.

DON
DON
DON
TOOT
TOOT
THEE
DON
DON

KRAK

DON'T LET ANYONE ELSE FIND YOU.

Vagabond

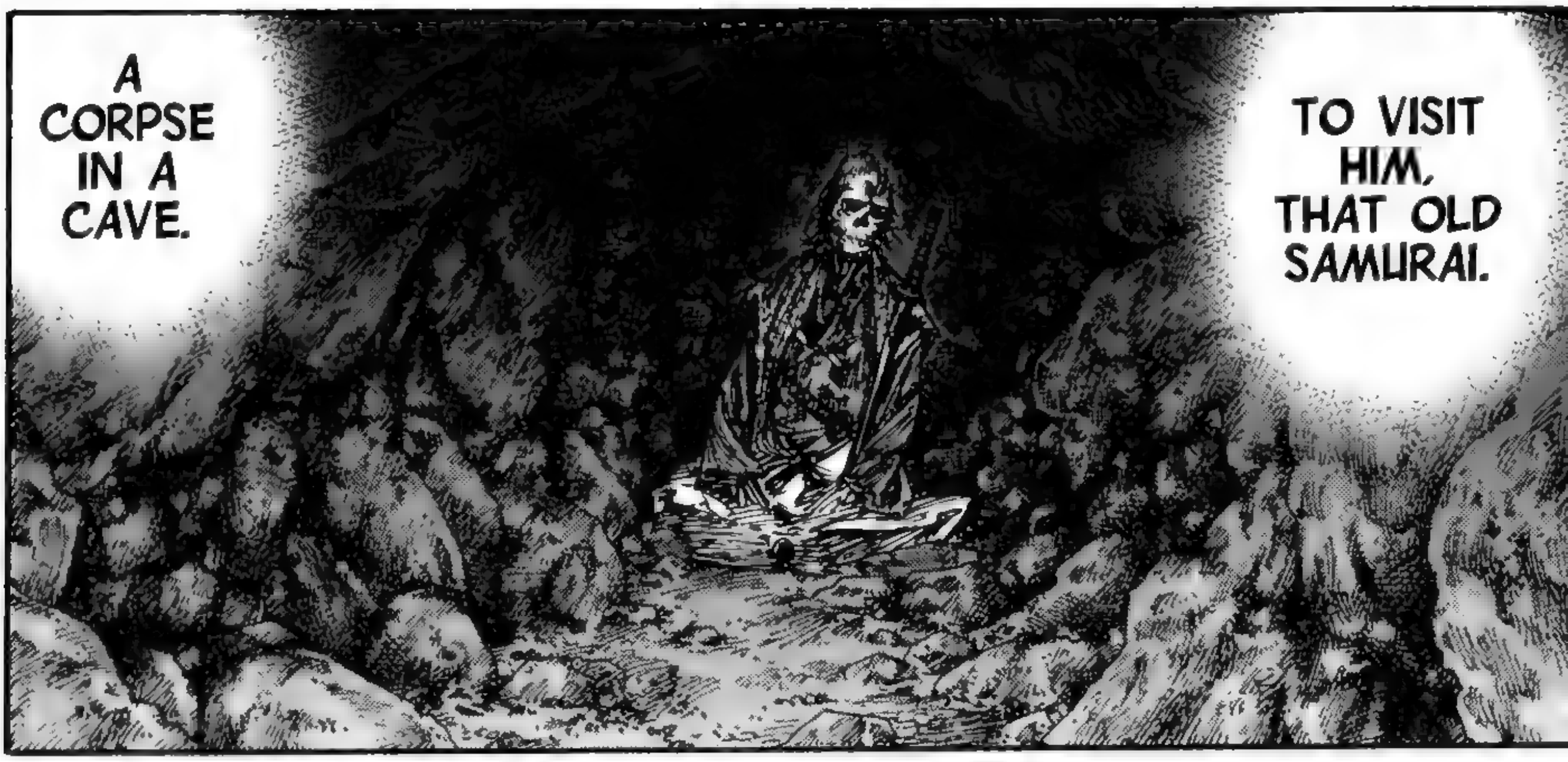


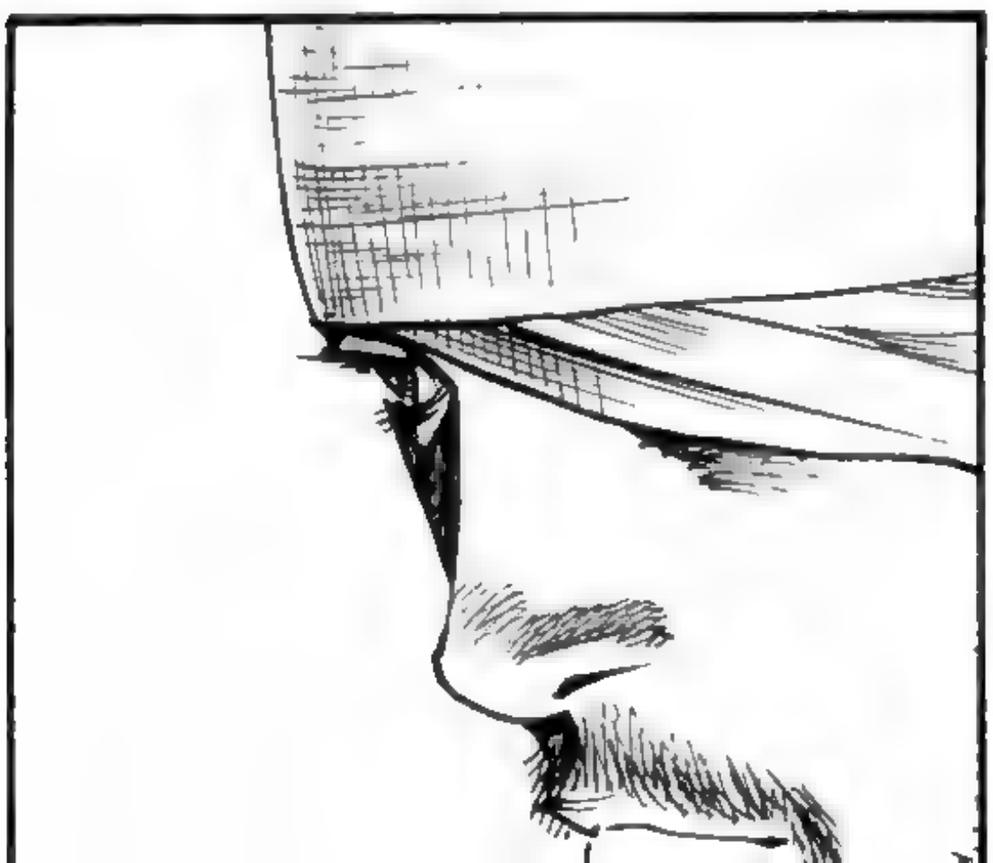
#208
Chance
Encounter

KRIK
KRIK

UMMF!

I USED TO GO TO THAT CAVE EVERY DAY.

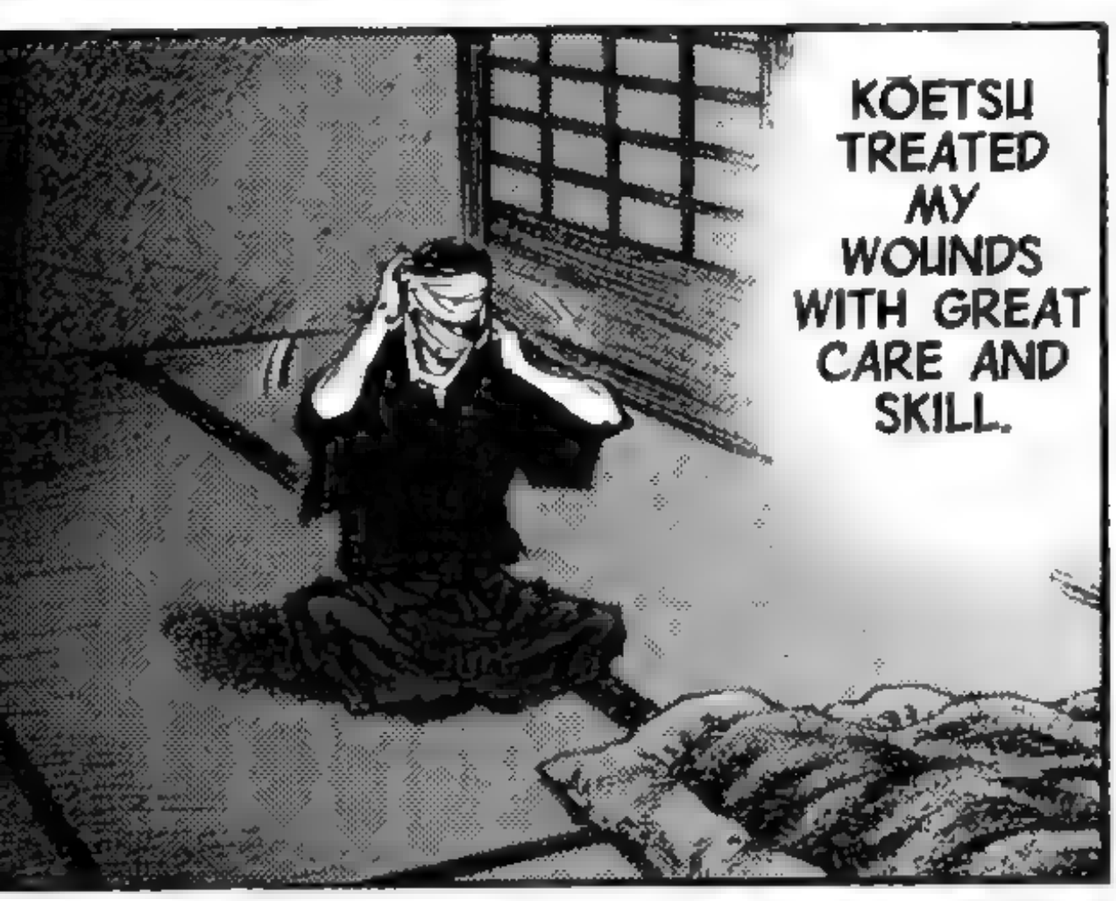

A CORPSE IN A CAVE.
TO VISIT HIM, THAT OLD SAMURAI.



...

YAWN...

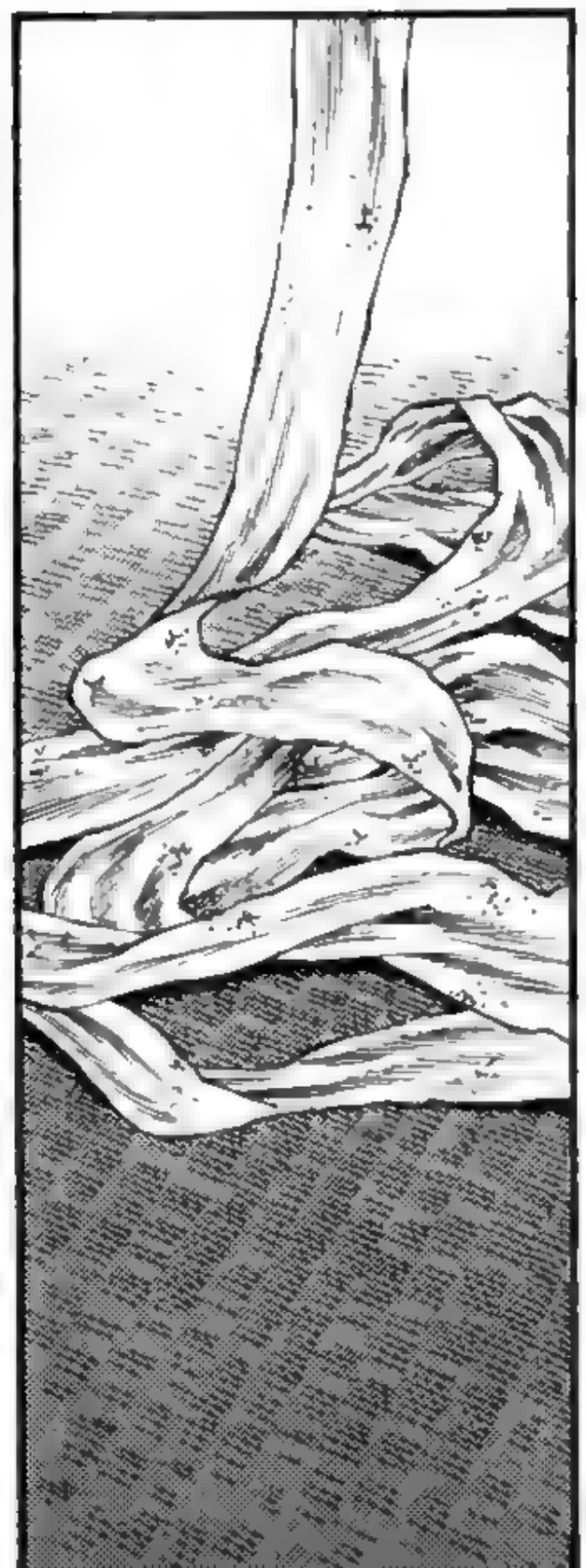
I HAVE NO CHOICE ...
I GAVE MY WORD.
DENSHI-CHIRŌ...
SPEAKING OF CORPSES...


KŌETSU TREATED MY WOUNDS WITH GREAT CARE AND SKILL.

...
HM...?

FWAK

...
THEY'VE CLOSED UP ALREADY.



...?

FWAK

HMPH!

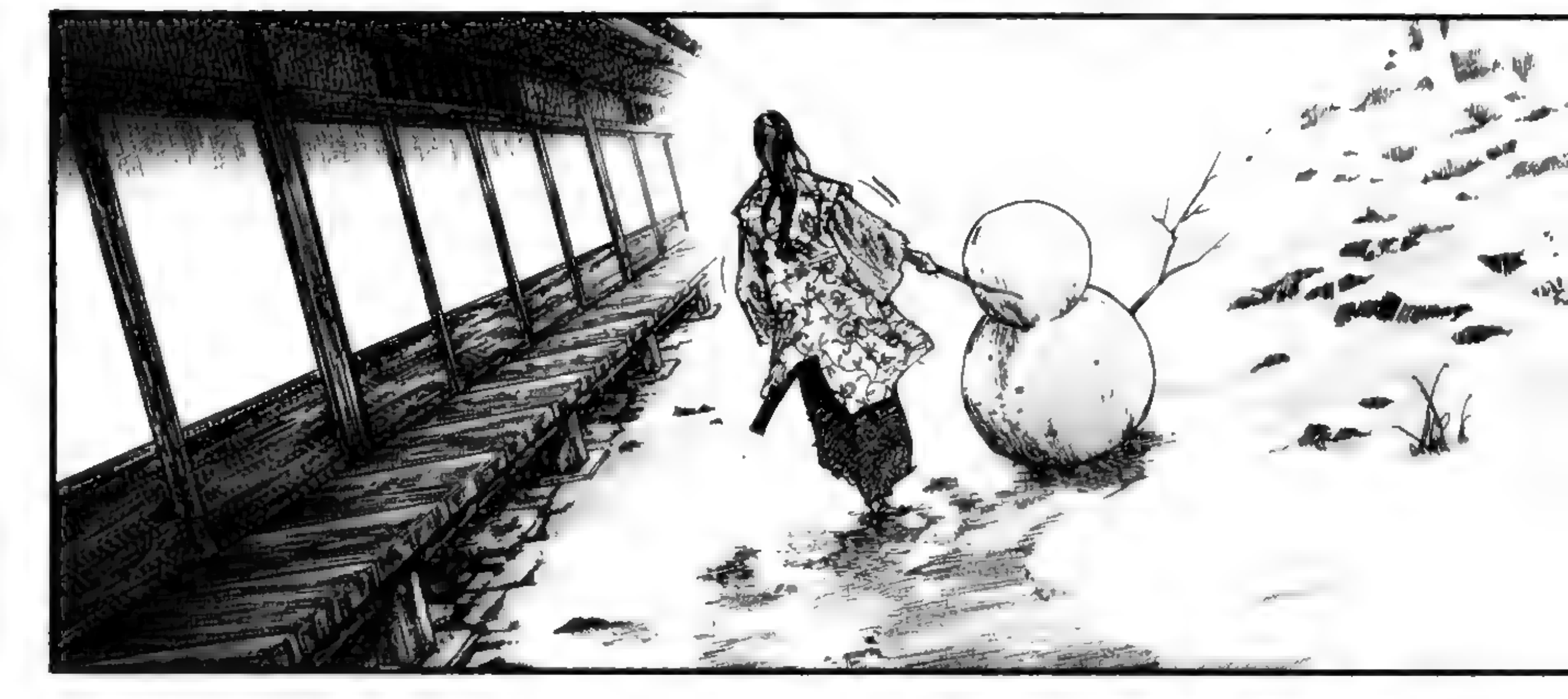
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY SNOWMAN ?

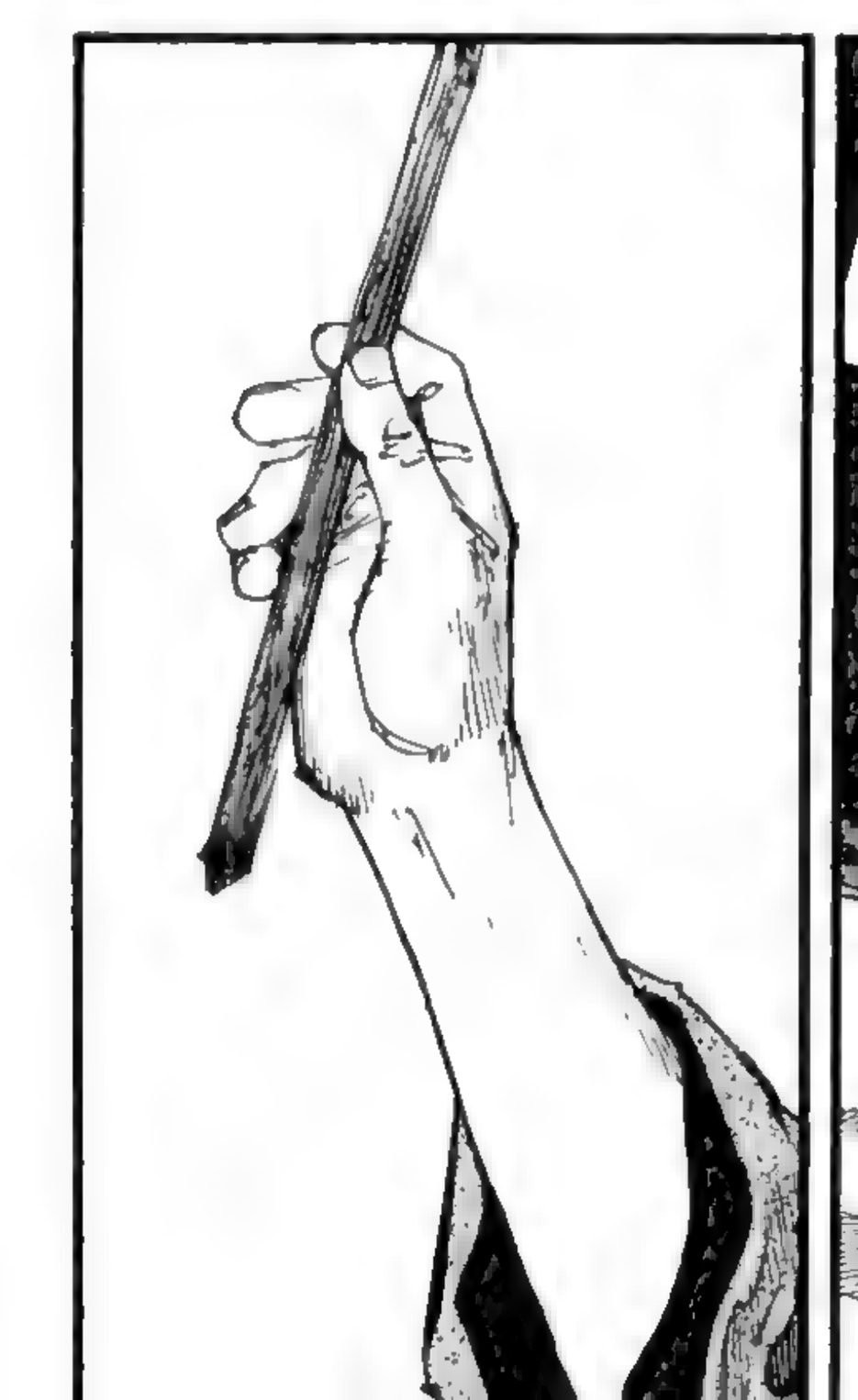
HE LOOKS FAMILIAR... OR IS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION?

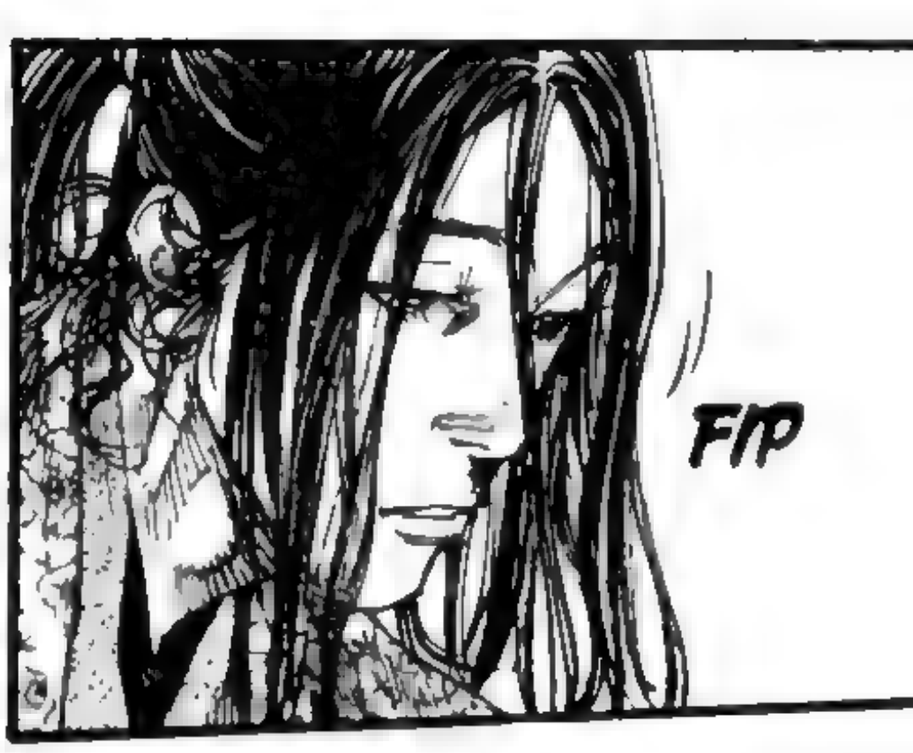
...

HM?

HEY, YOU.
HEY...






FIP

FIP

FWISSH

AH UHH...

AUH...

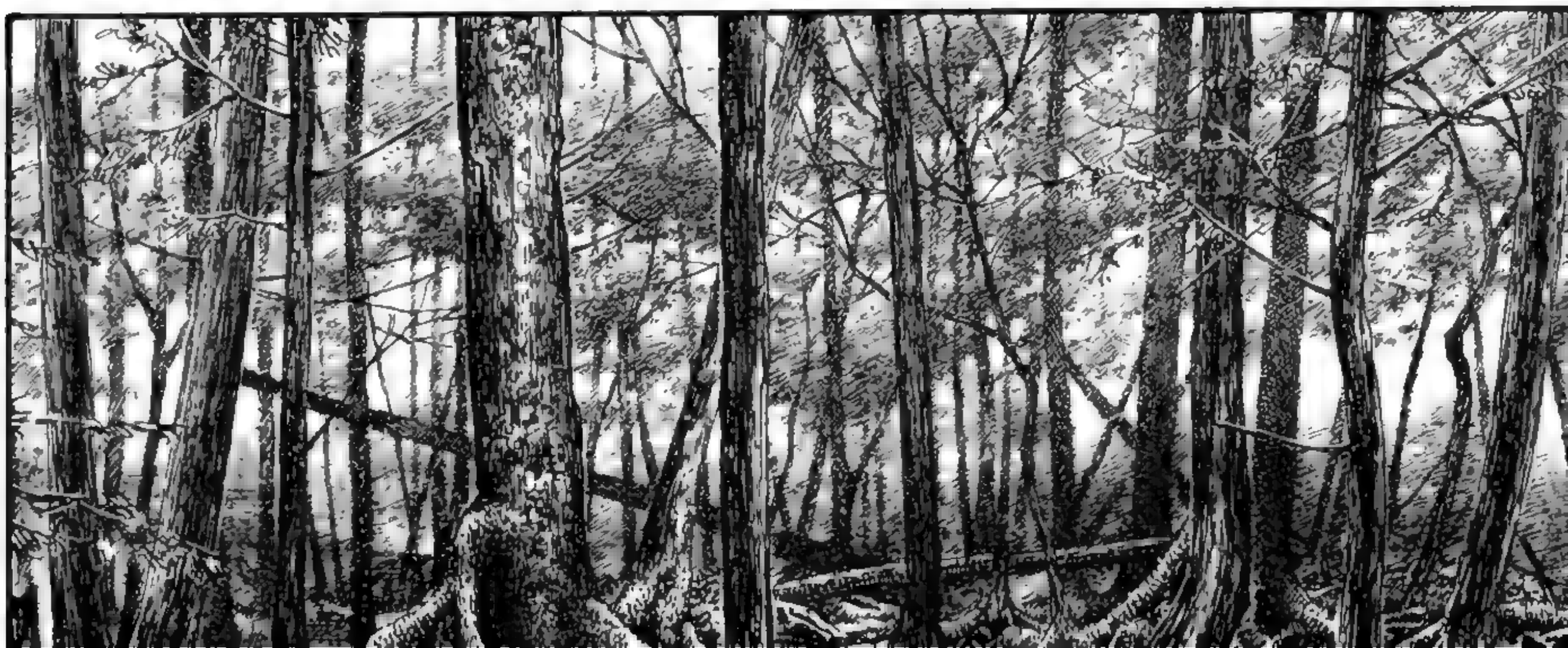
MOVE THIS WAY.
...

THAT'S RIGHT.
LIKE THIS?
IS THIS THE CONTINUA-TION OF MY DREAM?
WHO IS THIS GUY?
AUHH...

AH...
VWSHH
GRAB
FICH
HE'S TRYING TO CHOP THE SNOWMAN IN HALF...
WITH THAT FLIMSY STICK?
FICH
FICH

FWP

FWICH



I USED TO HAVE IT...

SUCH UNDER-STANDING... I'VE ENCOUNTERED IT WITHIN MYSELF.

WATCHING HIM HAS MADE ME REALIZE...

SNP
SNAP
SNP

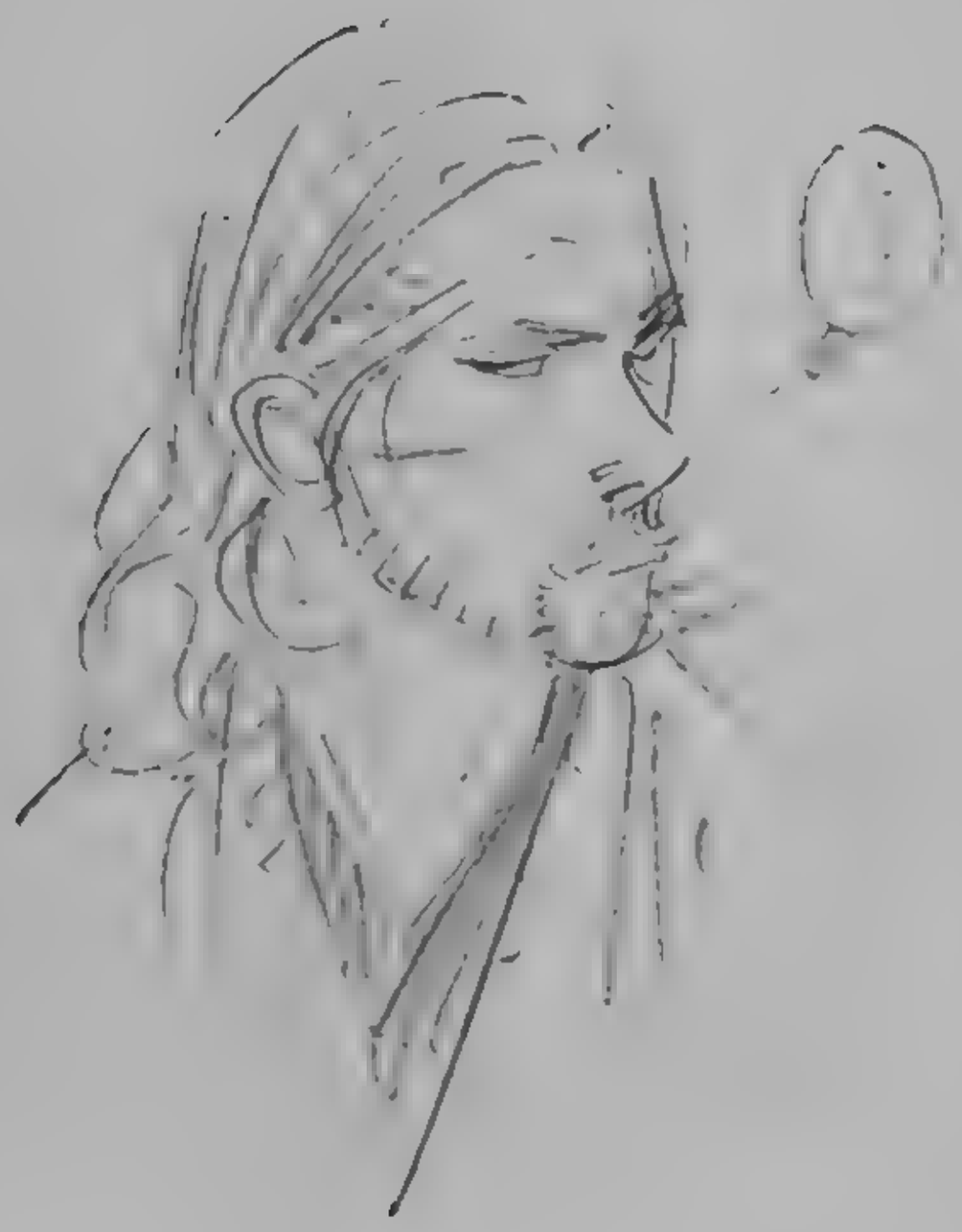
ZWOSH

THAT WAS AN AWARENESS I HAD, AN UNDER-STANDING...

WHY DID I MOVE AWAY FROM IT?

AHH.
UHHH.
...
FUP
FWAP
AHH...
FUP
FUP
FUP
FUP
AH.
FWAP
AHH...
HM?

Vagabond



BACK THEN I HAD IT. I UNDER-STOOD.
I WAS AWARE...

FUP

FUP

HEY!
SWAP

TAK
WATCHING THIS FELLOW HAS MADE ME REALIZE THAT.

#209

A Long Detour

FWOM

FWOM
FWOM
AUHH AH.

HE STILL HAS IT.

OW!
FWICH
WHY DID I MOVE AWAY FROM IT?
I USED TO HAVE IT TOO.
YOU BAS-TARD!
WHY DIDN'T I GO STRAIGHT ALONG THAT PATH?
FWAK
HEY!

THE TREES...

FSSHH

ALL A PART OF THE WHOLE.
THE EARTH...
THE WIND...

THE SWORD WAS SUPPOSED TO TEACH ME.

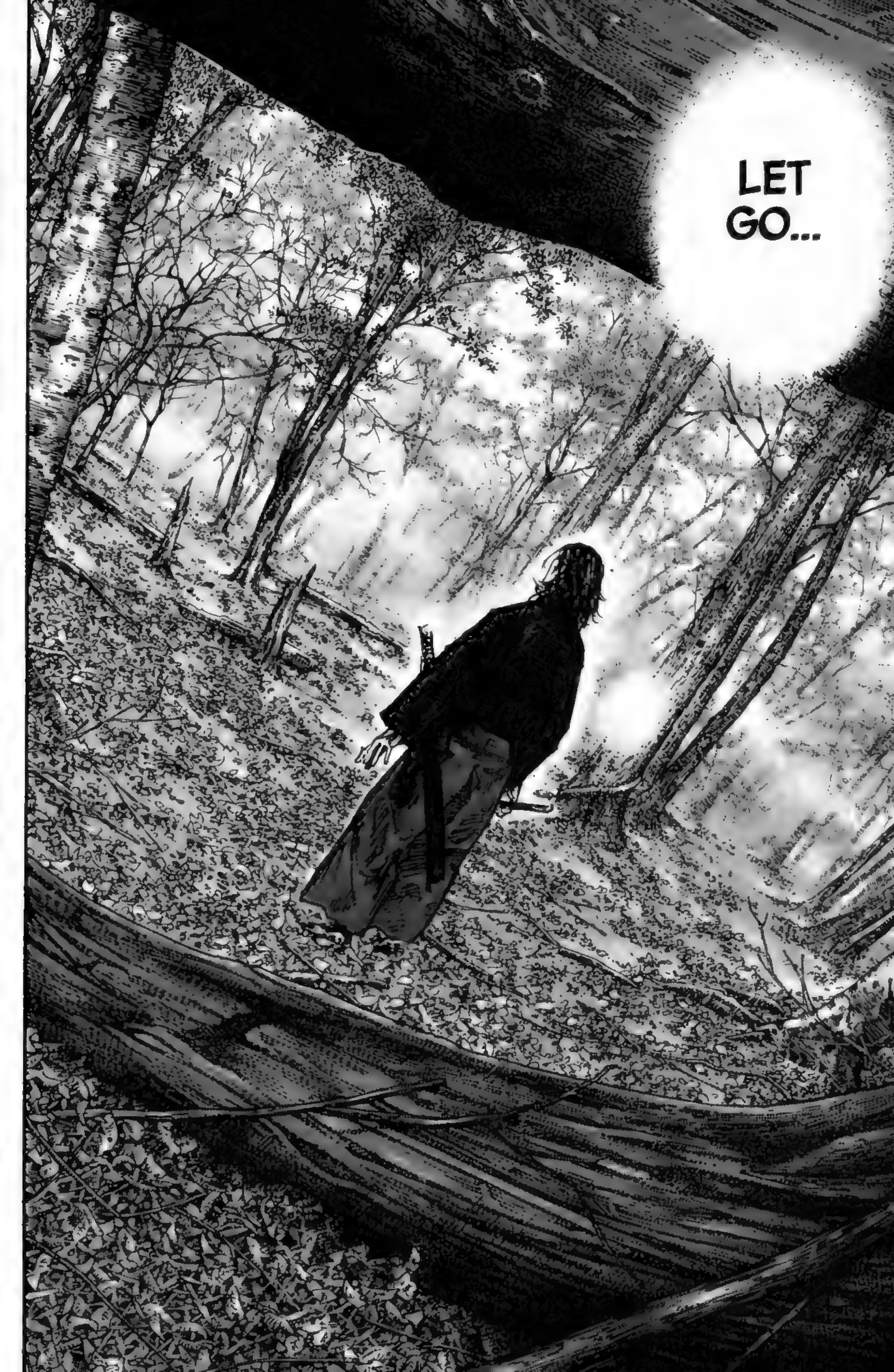
HAYUU
THAT'S RIGHT.

IT'S LIGHT.

THIS WON'T BE A SIMPLE TASK...

EVEN THIS TWIG SHOULD BE ABLE TO SHOW ME THE WAY.

CLEAR YOUR MIND AND LISTEN...


LET GO...

DARN IT!
NIGHT WHEN I ALMOST HAD IT!
AHH!

FWAP
AHH!
!!

THE WEIGHT OF THE TWIG.

THERE...
I FEEL IT IN MY FINGER-TIPS.

...
MUTTER MUTTER

I CAN'T HELP BUT SMILE.

WHY'D I TAKE SUCH A LONG DETOUR?

FWOOSH

FWP

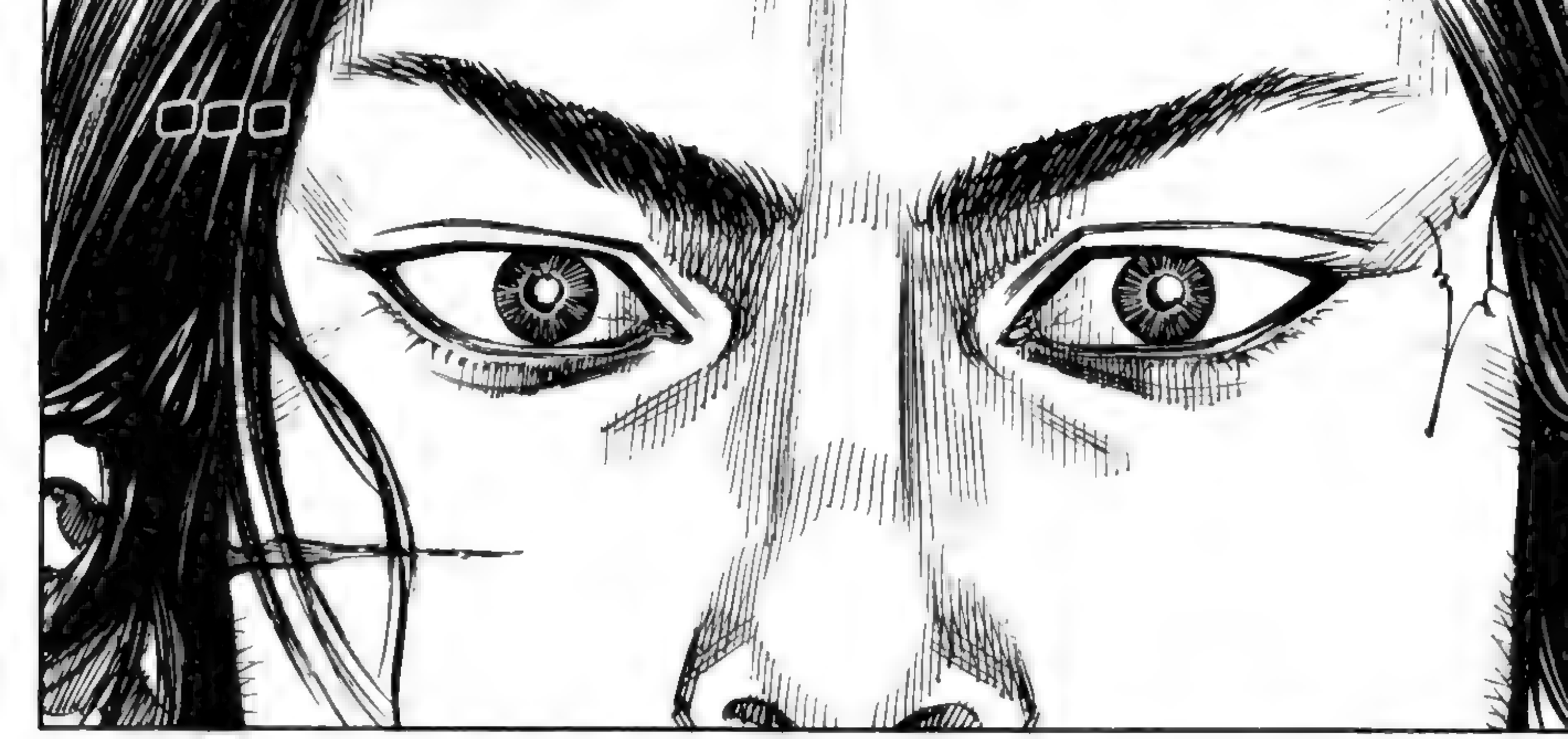
AHUHH!

AUHH...

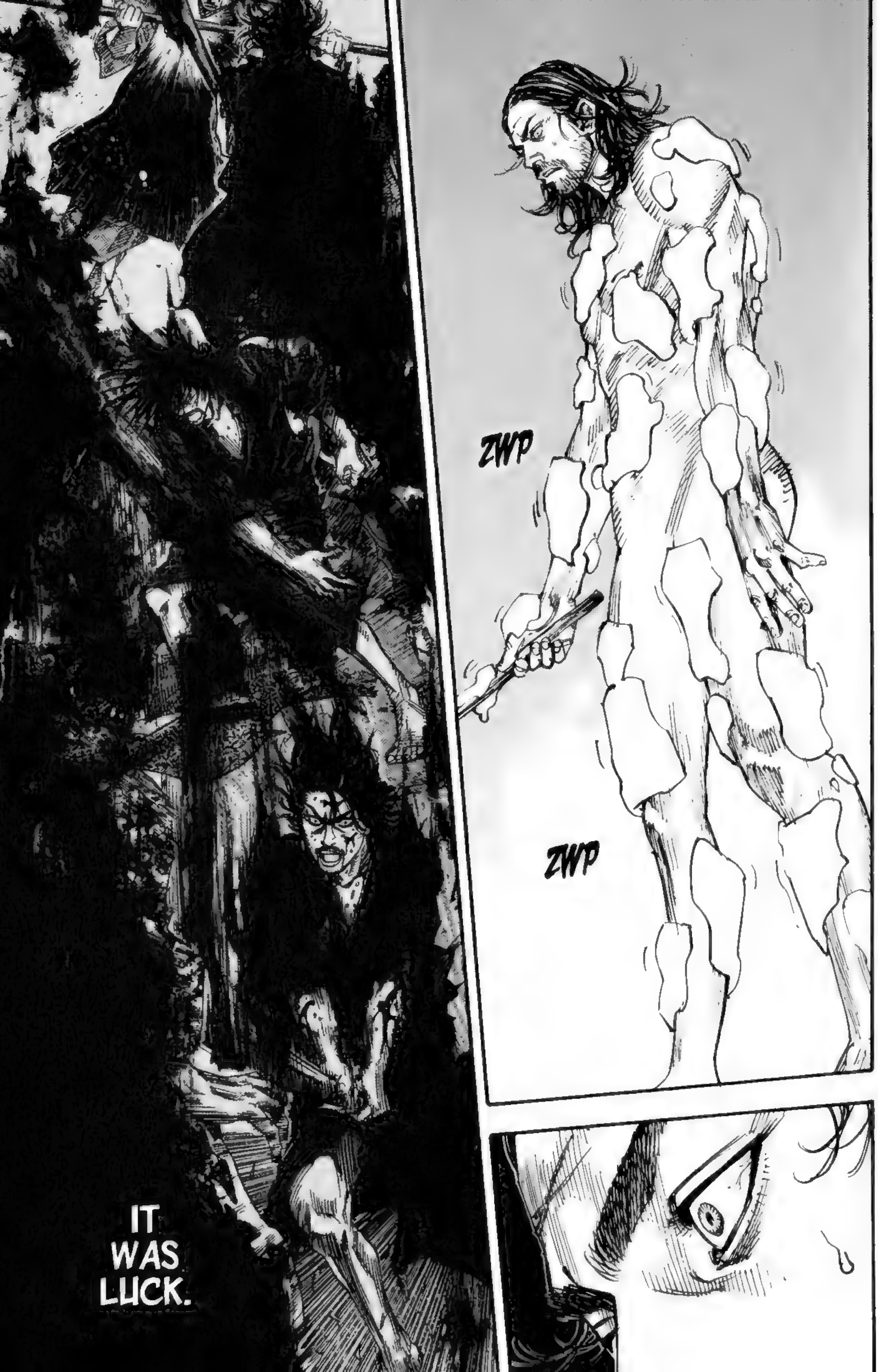
HMPH!

HAH

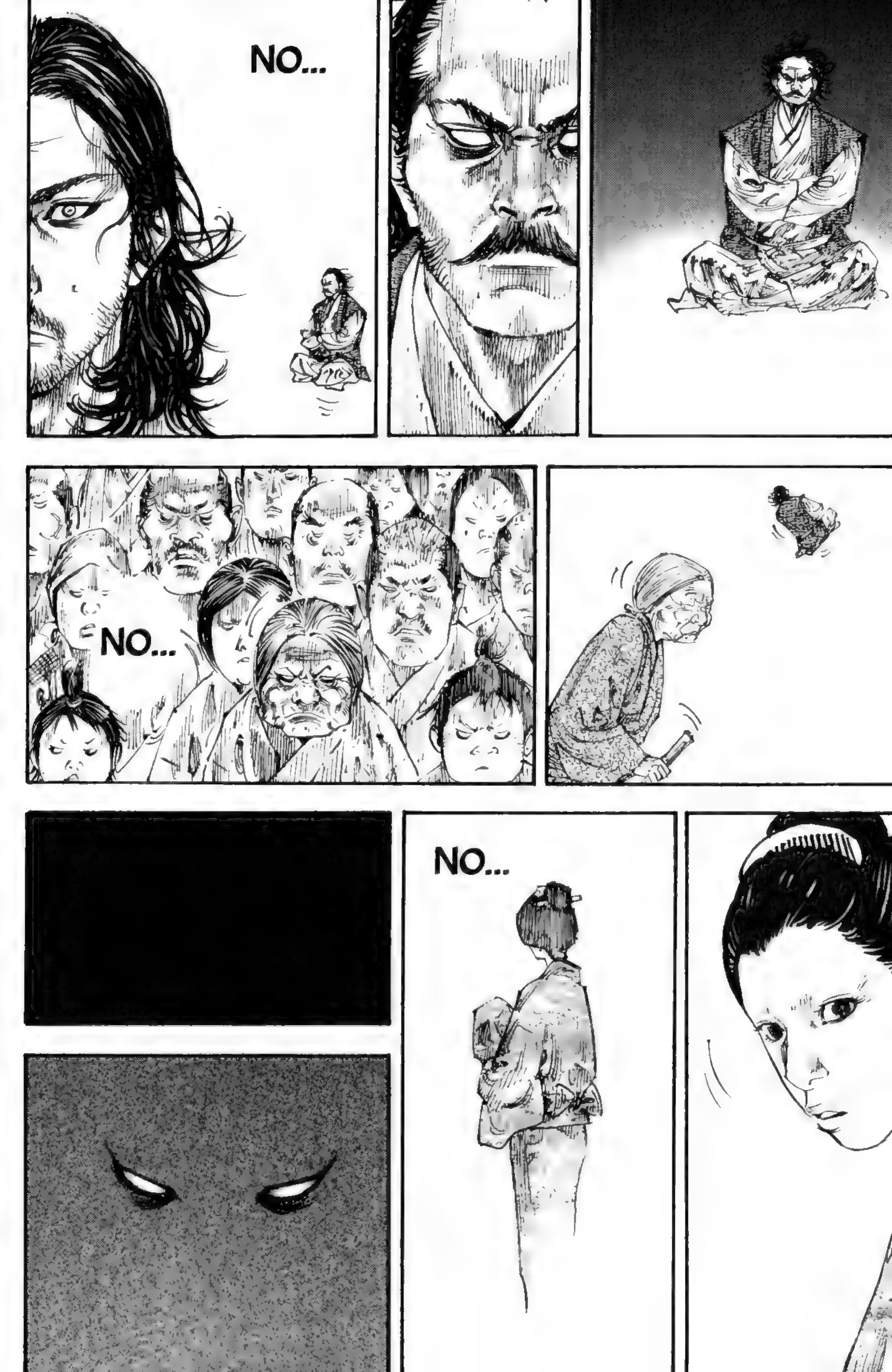
I CAN'T ...



ZWP

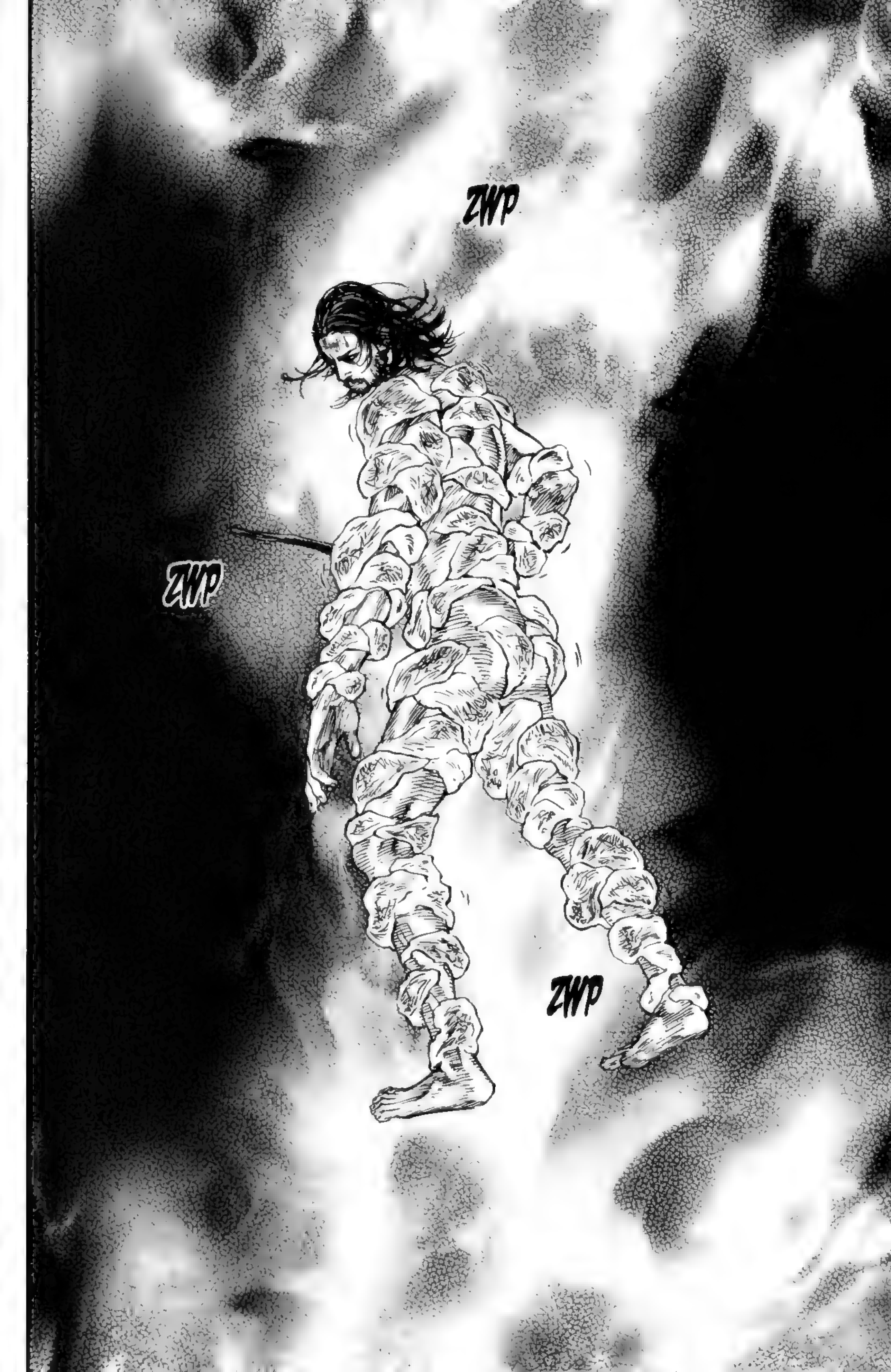

ZWP
ZWP
IT WAS LUCK.

FWSH
FWSH
ZWP
UMF
...
KRIK
KRIK
WHAT TOOK THAT AWARE-NESS AWAY FROM ME?
IT WAS ONLY BY CHANCE THAT I KEPT WINNING.


NO...
NO...
NO...

I DID IT...TO MYSELF?

ZWP


ZWP
ZWP
ZWP

HUF
ZWP
HUF
HUF
HUF
.....

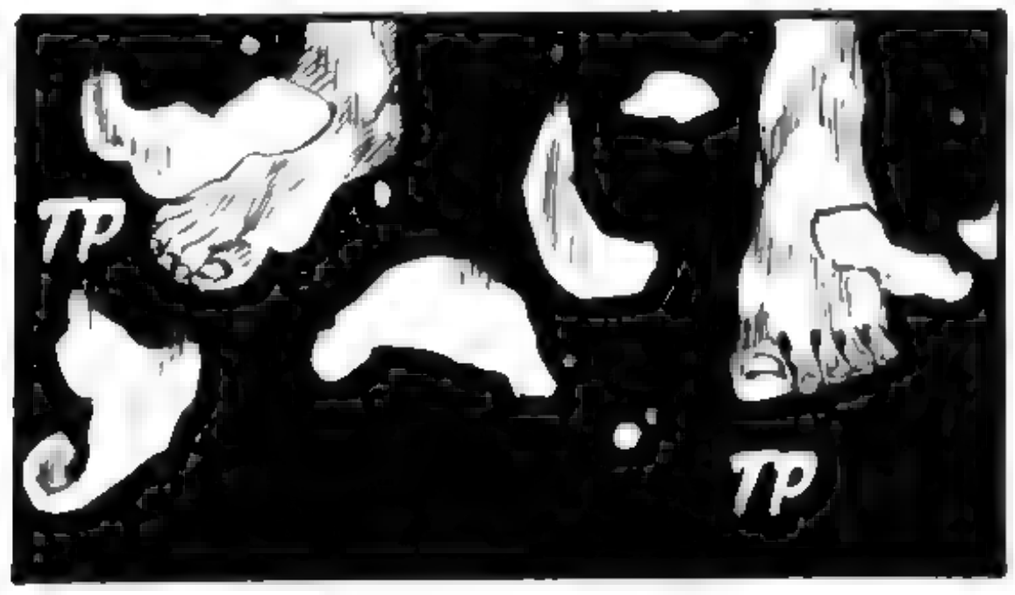
FWAK
GASP!
KTNK

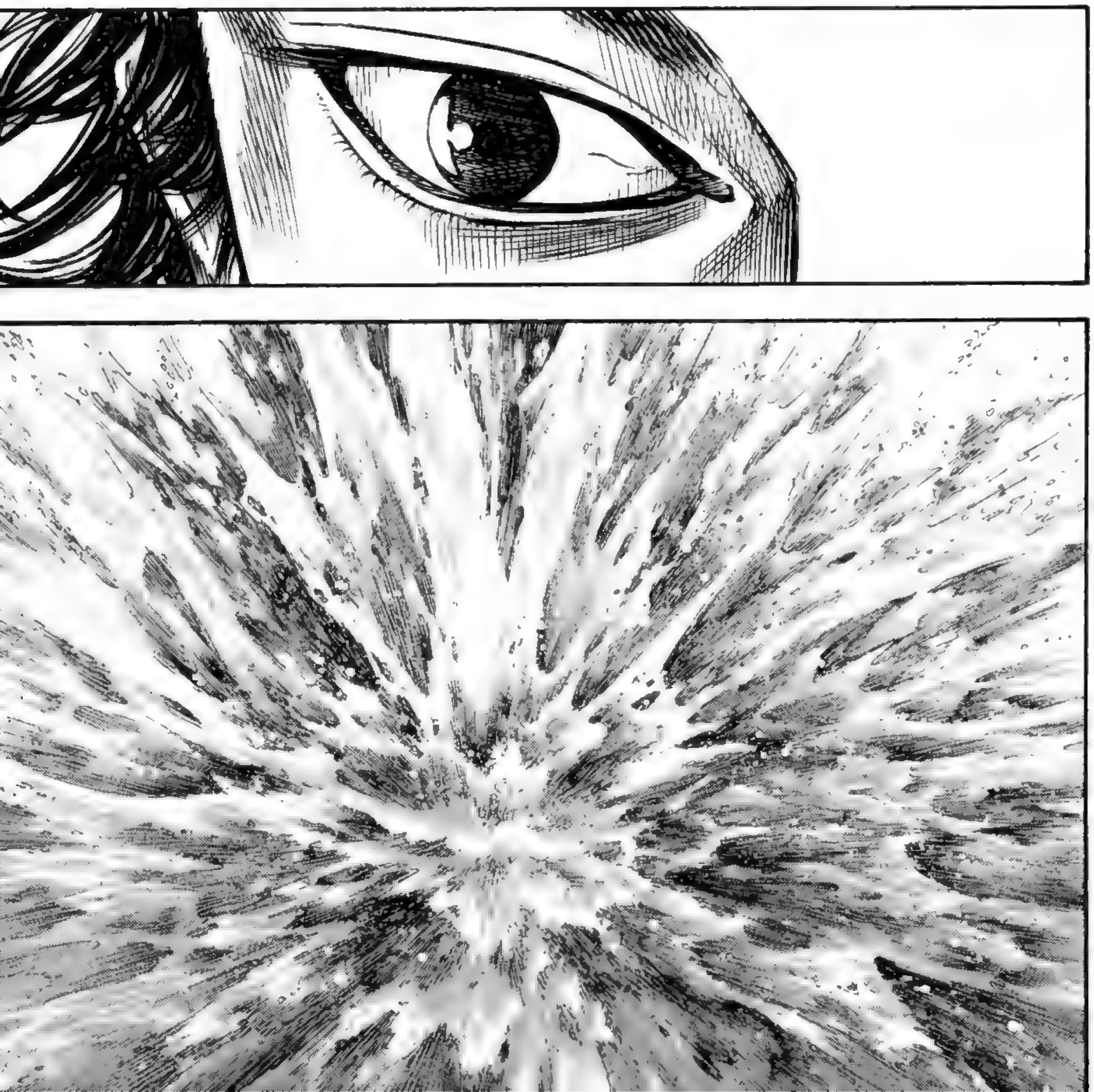
I DID IT TO MYSELF.

I'M THE ONE WHO MOVED AWAY FROM IT.

HAAAH...

FWP
FWP
FWP


TP
TP



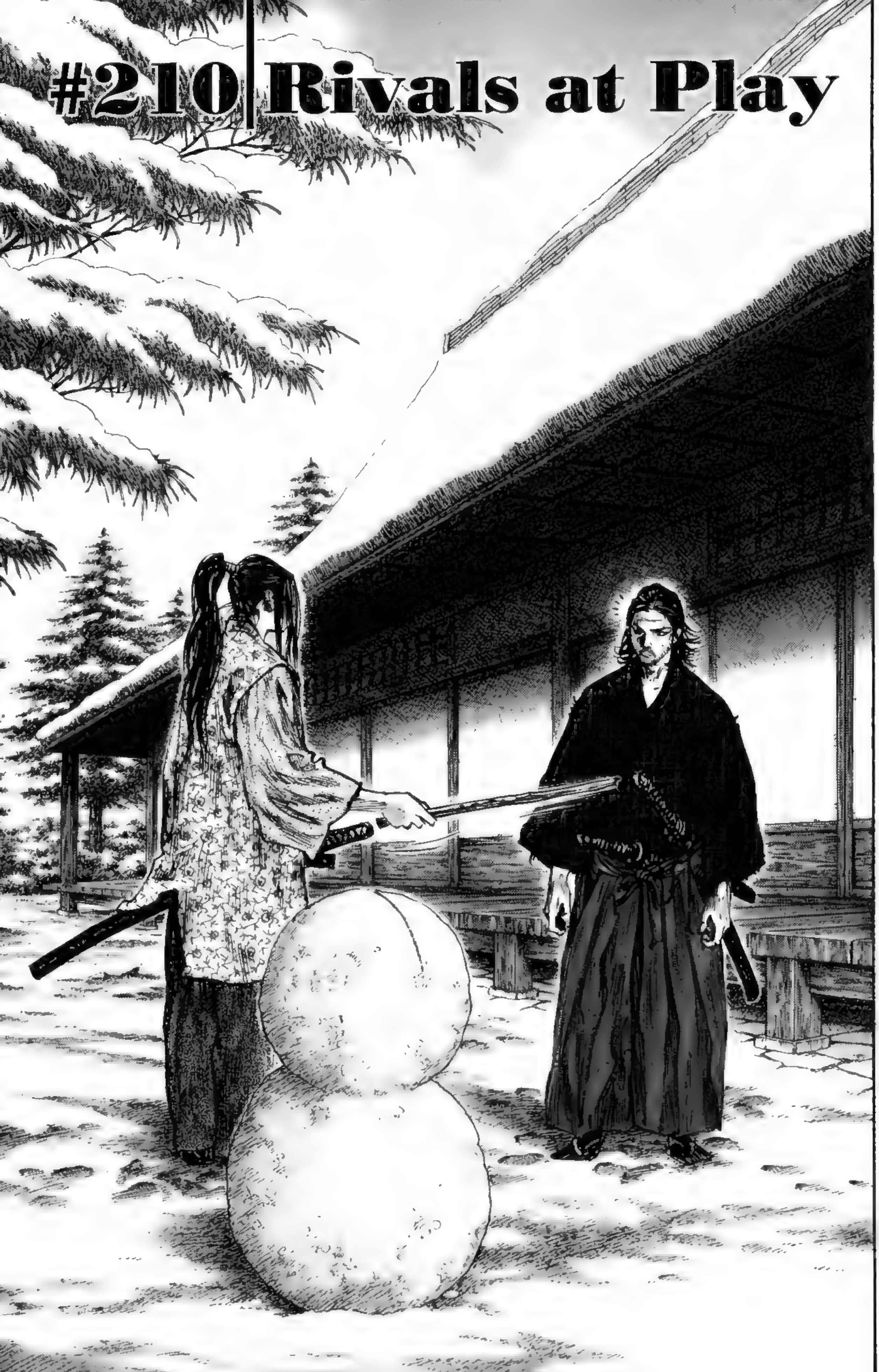
I'M SORRY.

AUHH...

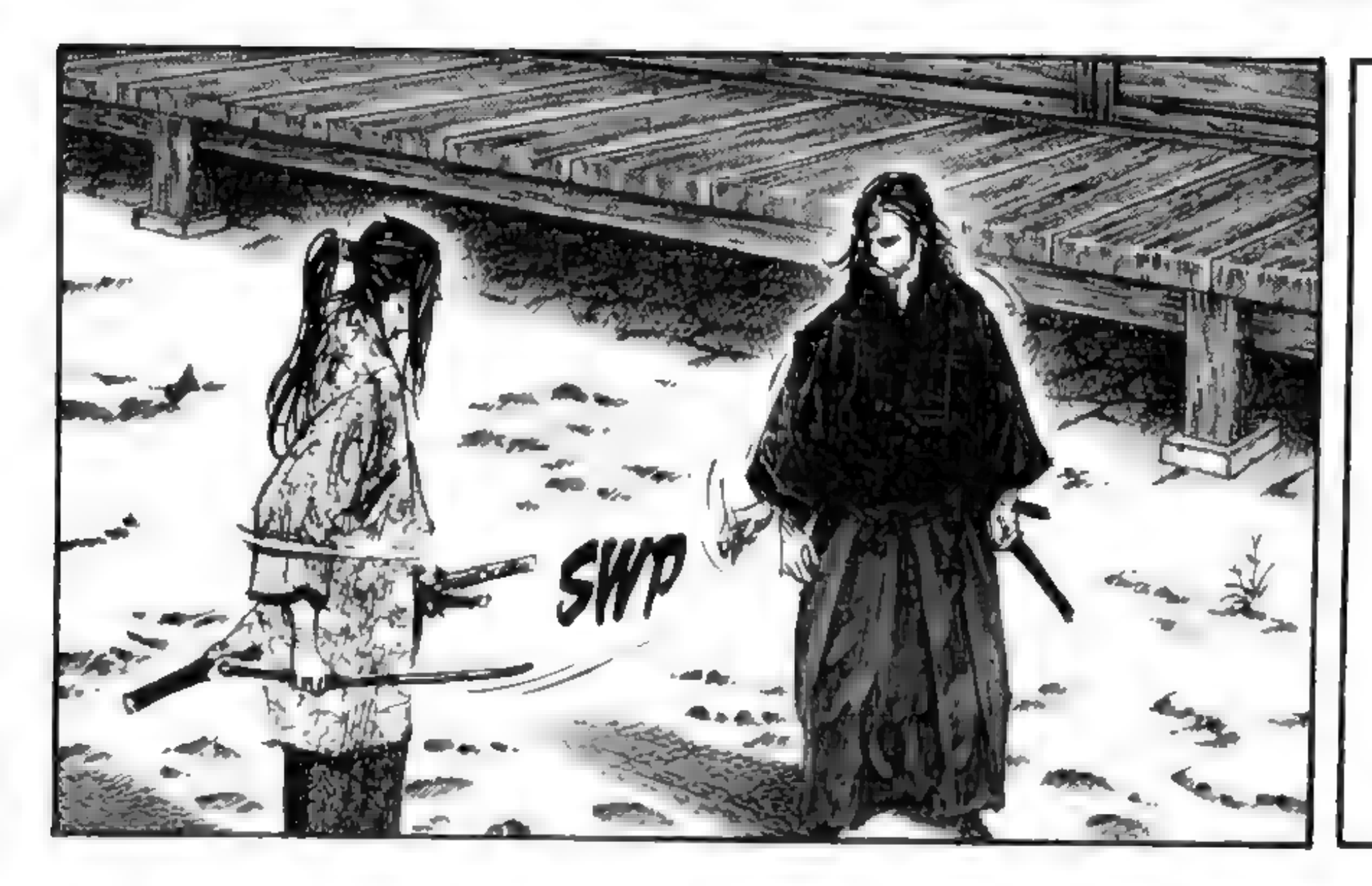
Vagabond

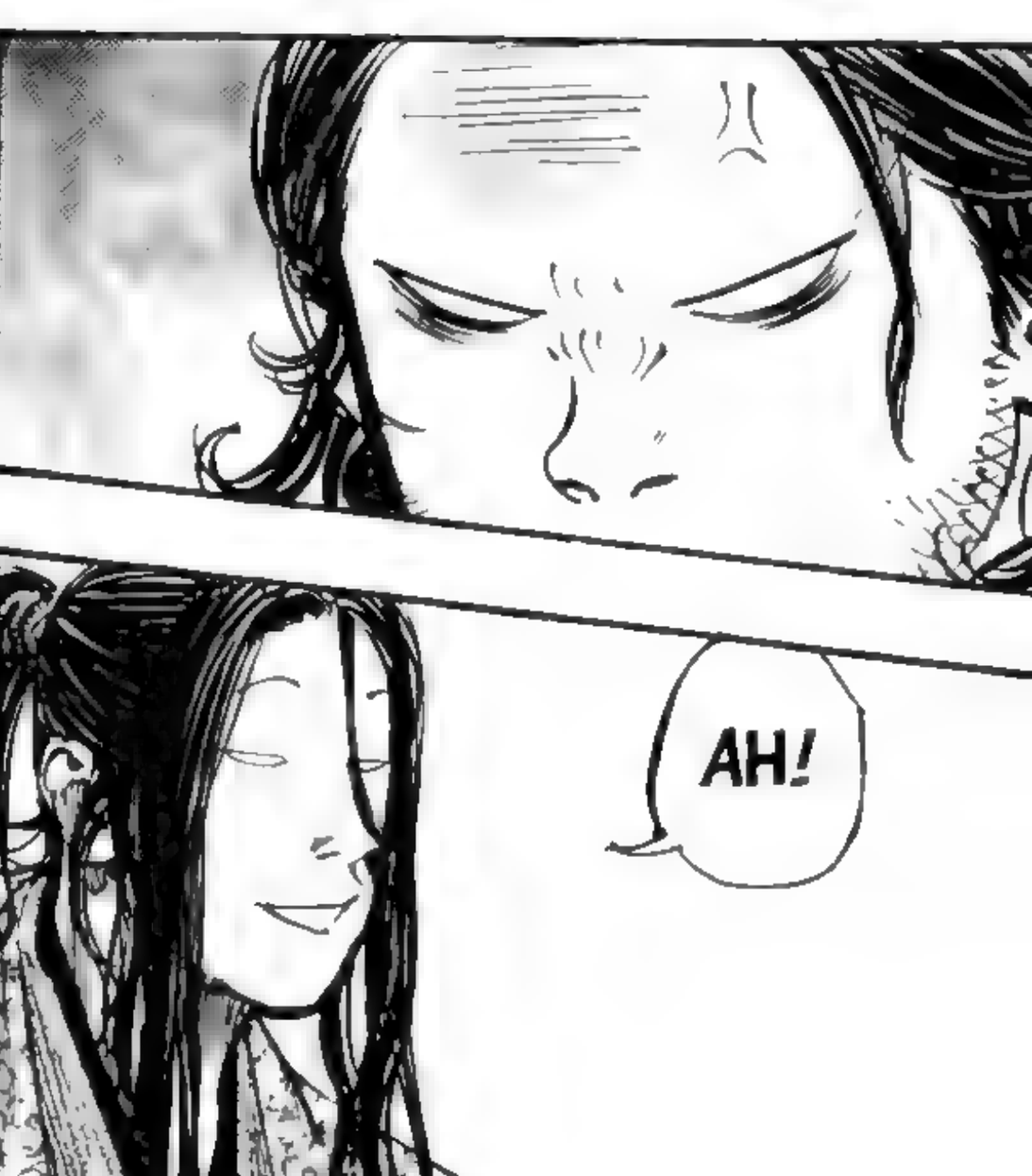
(SORRY!)

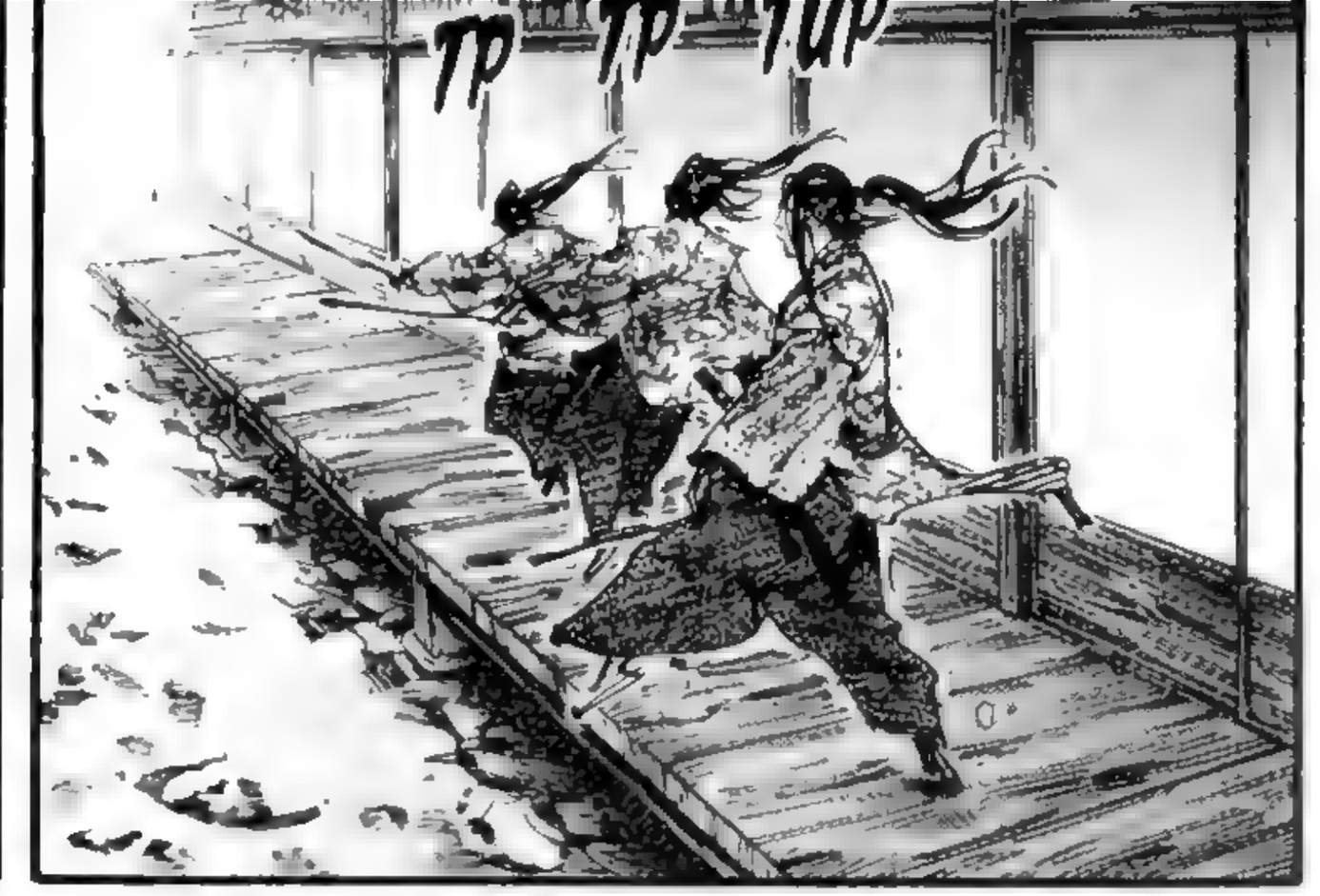
#210 Rivals at Play



AUHH.






TP TP TUP

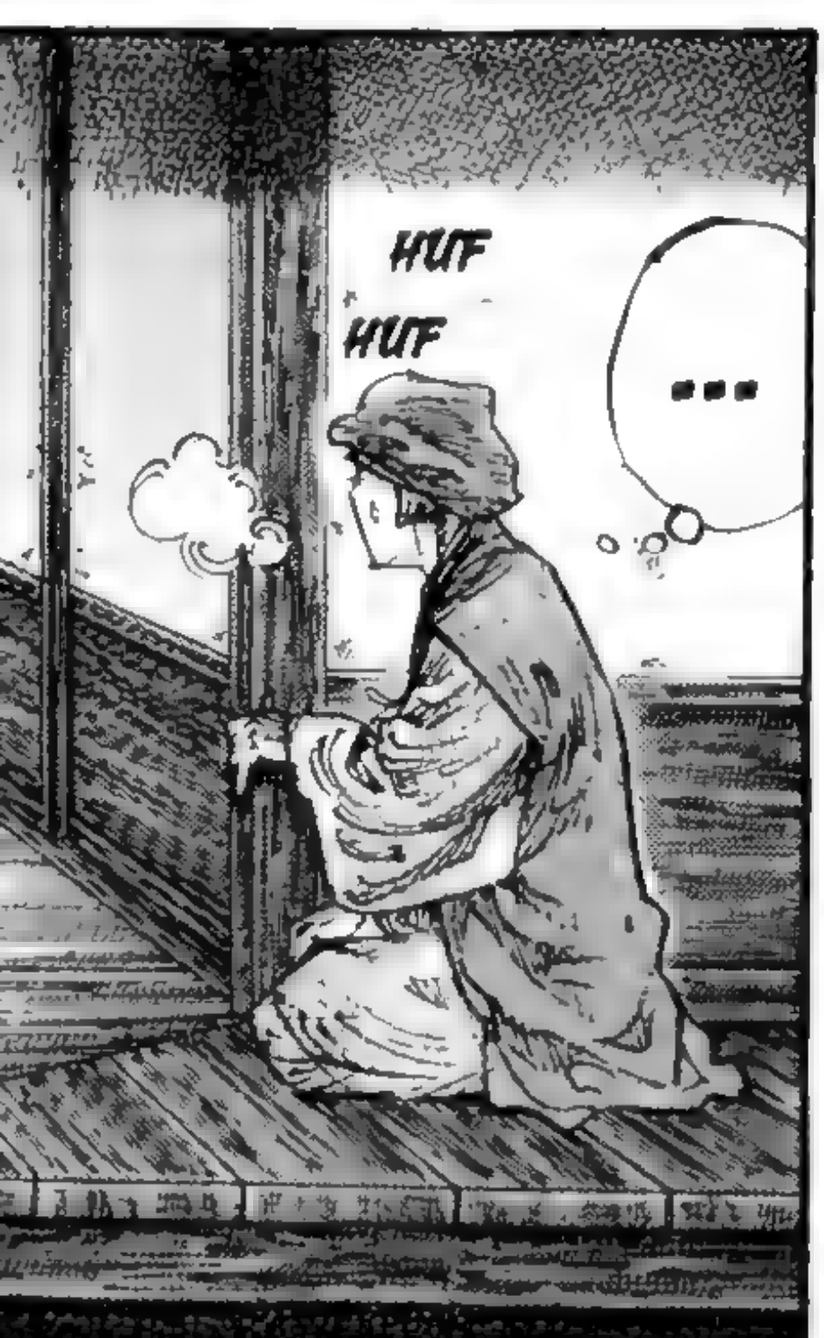
FWOM
FWOM

SHOOP

MUTTER
MUTTER

FWOOSH
HUF
HUF
HUF

OH MY...
OH...


HUF
HUF
...

GLANCE
GLANCE
SWP
GULP

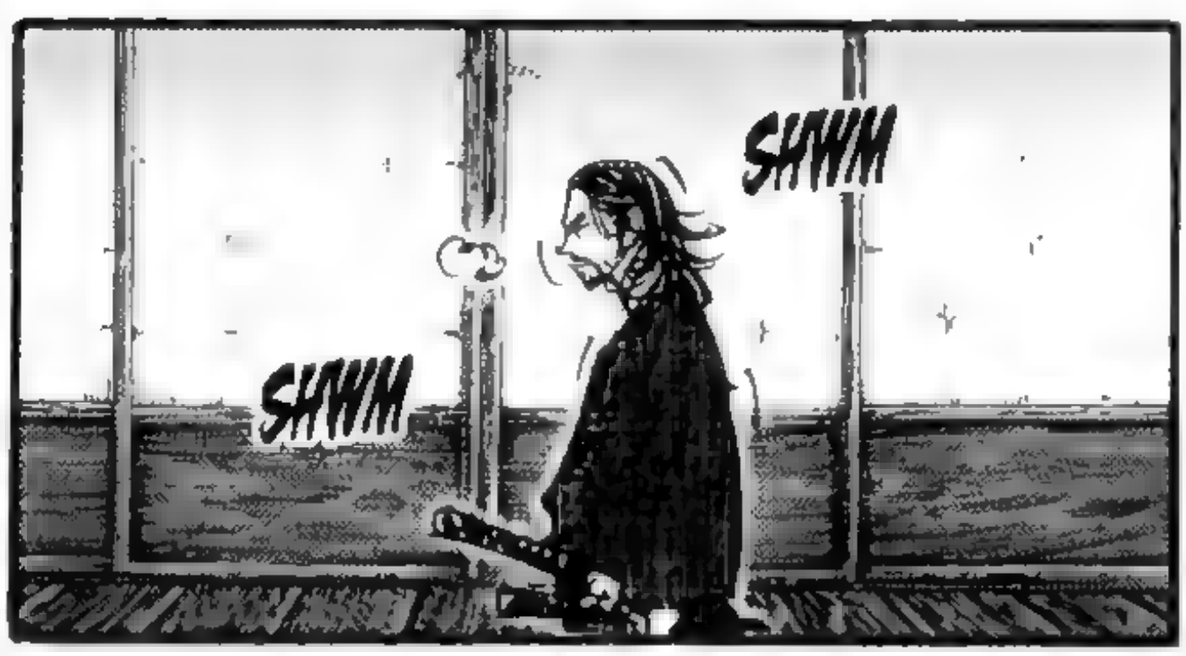
...QUITE A SPEC-TACLE!
THIS IS...
THMP THMP

VWISH

VWOOSH

HAD THIS BEEN A REAL MATCH ...
GULP

SHWM
SHWM


SHWM
SHWM

SMIRK
...

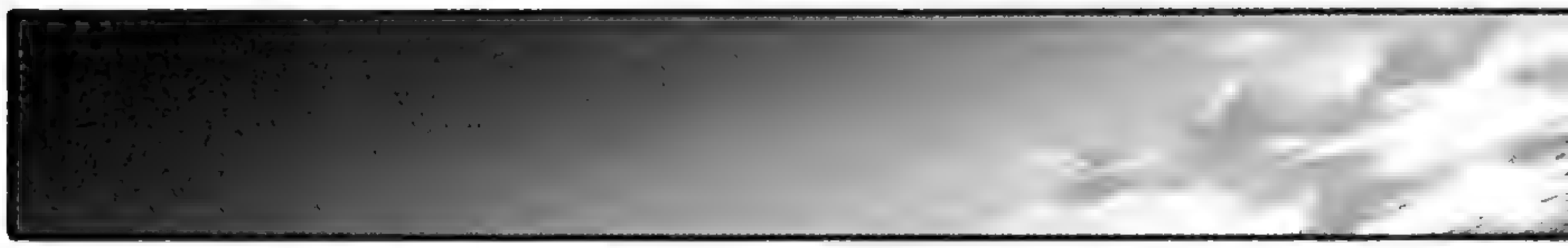
...

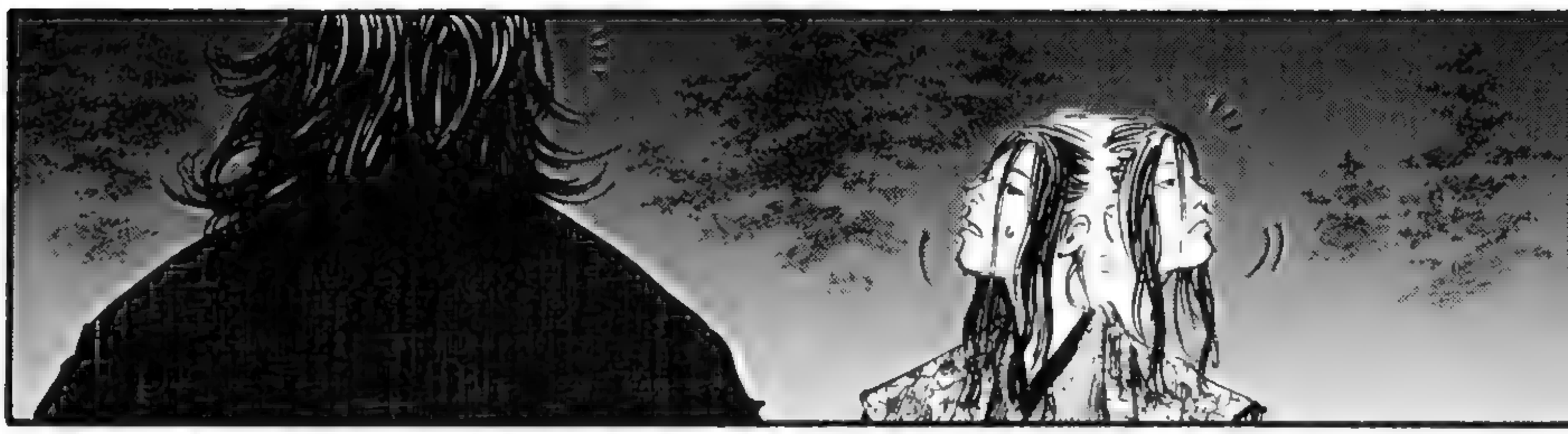
AHHH...
CHK

F
W
S
S
H
H

FWSSHH

KCHK





ZHOOP

AUHH ...

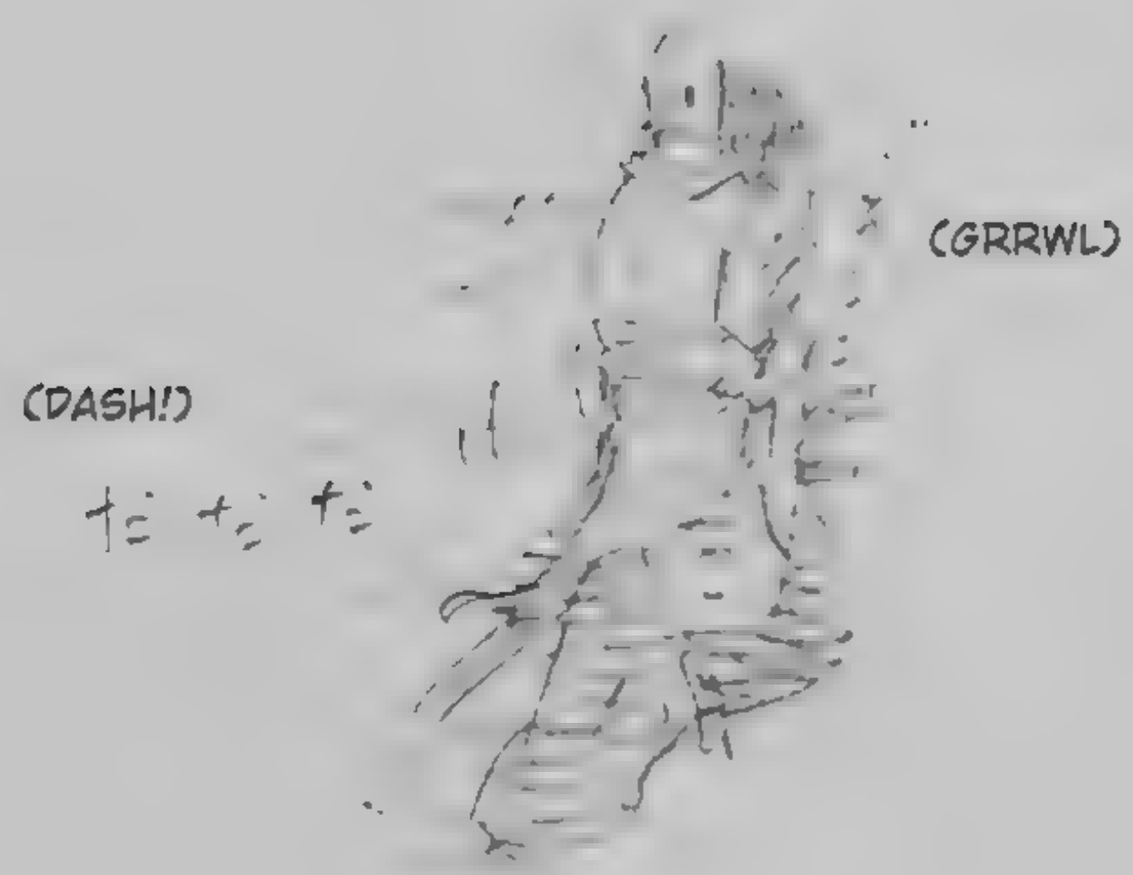
HOW COULD IT BE GETTING DARK ALREADY ?

MY MY, YOU TWO... ARE YOU PLAYING NICE?

TOO BAD HE DIDN'T DRAW.
HUF
FWOM
FWOM

ALTHOUGH I THINK I KNOW WHO WOULD'VE WON.

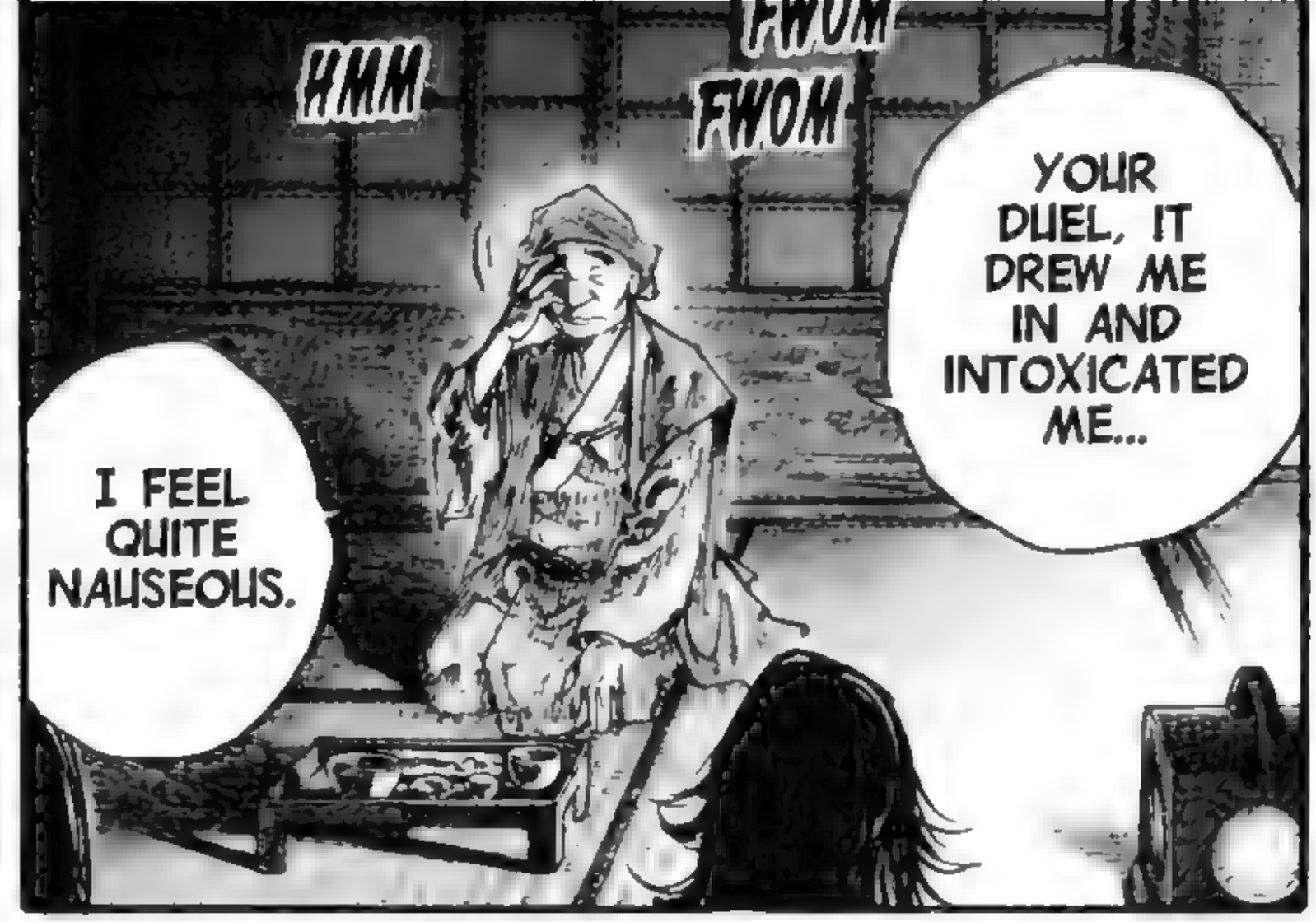
Vagabond

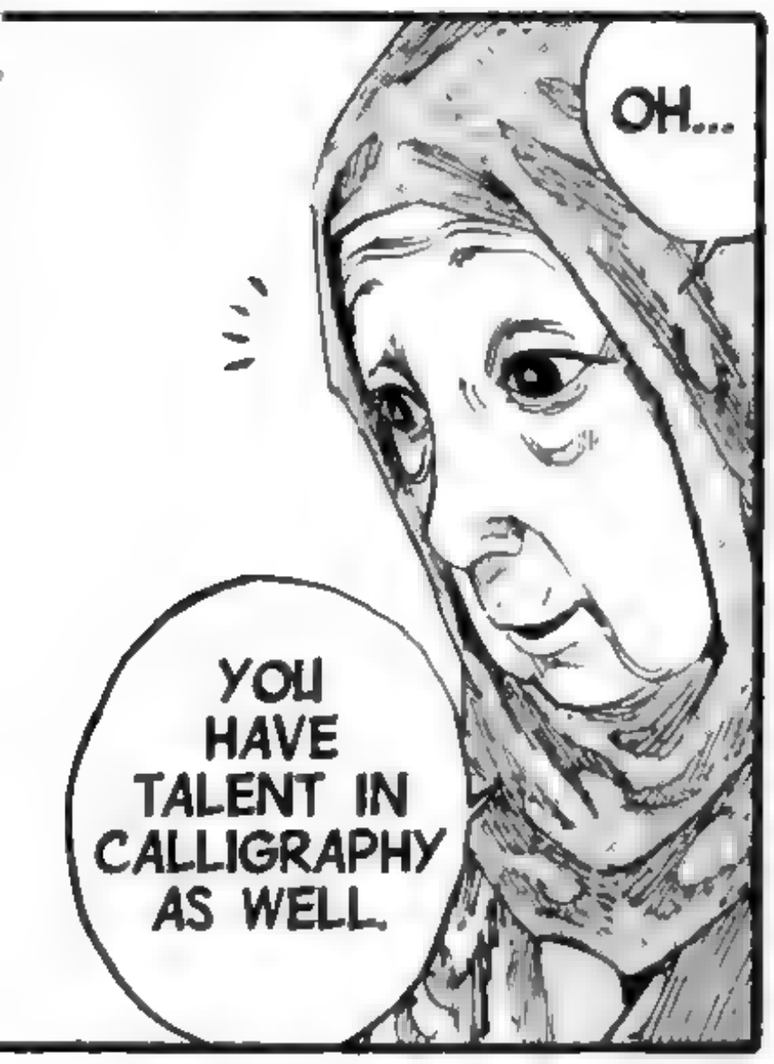

(GRRWL)
(DASH!)
ta ta ta

#211
On the Eve of Battle

MNCH
MNCH
MNCH

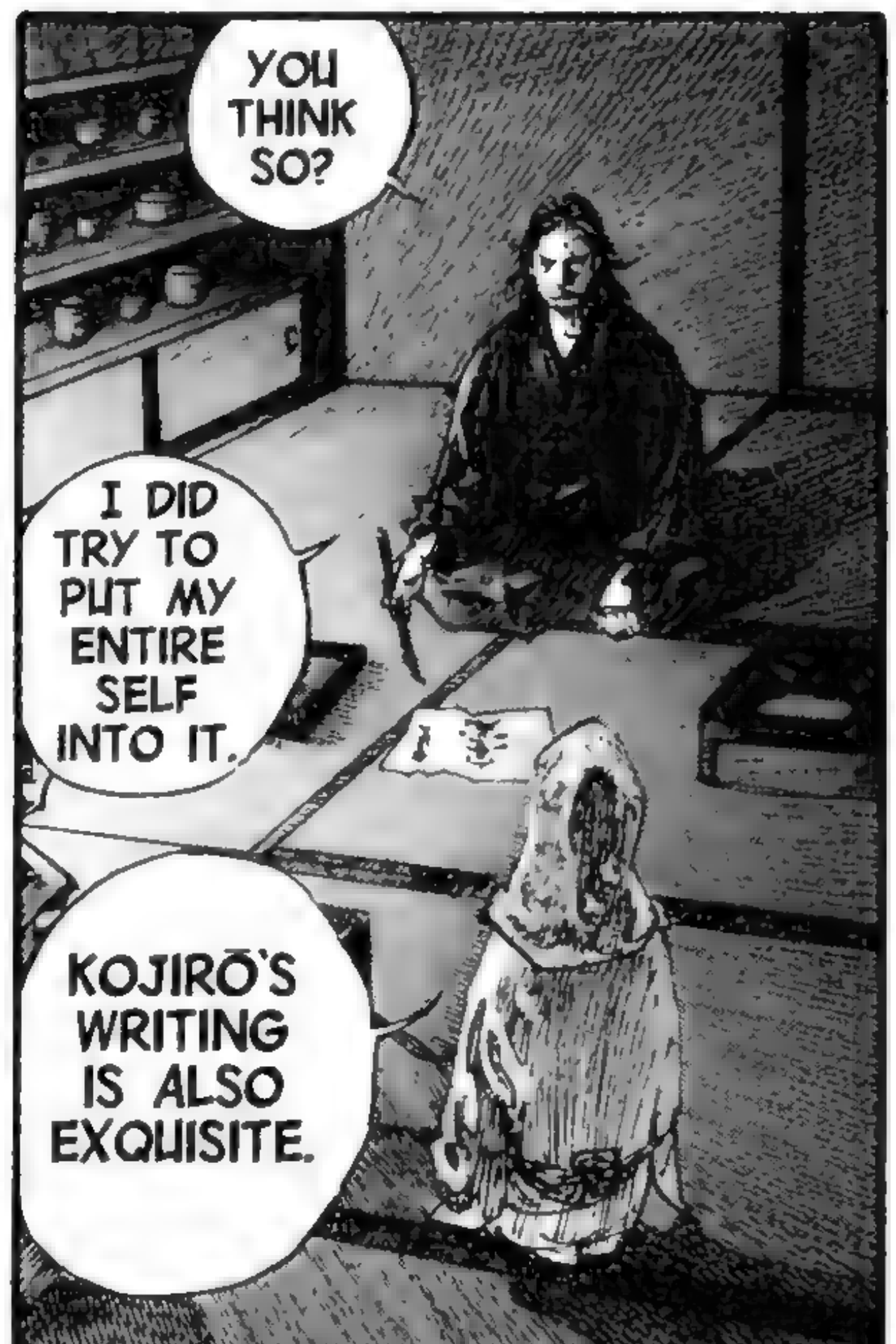
URR


HMM
FWOM FWOM
YOUR DUEL, IT DREW ME IN AND INTOXICATED ME...
I FEEL QUITE NAUSEOUS.


OH...
YOU HAVE TALENT IN CALLIGRAPHY AS WELL.

SURE.
WE HAVEN'T INTRODUCED YOU TO EACH OTHER YET.
MUSASHI.
PLEASE ?
KOJIRŌ CANNOT HEAR. WOULD YOU MIND WRITING YOUR NAME?

YOU TWO, BE NICE TO EACH OTHER.
THAT'S IT FOR INTRODUCTIONS.


YOU THINK SO?
I DID TRY TO PUT MY ENTIRE SELF INTO IT.
KOJIRŌ'S WRITING IS ALSO EXQUISITE.

AHH!
...

GANRYU...

.....

.....

KTUNK

HUH?!

SCHNORR
ZZZZZ
SO QUICK TO FALL ASLEEP.
SCHNORR

IS HE A GENIUS...?
OR JUST ABSURD ?
SCHNORR
HE'S FEAR-LESS...
WHAT IF I WAS OUT TO KILL HIM?

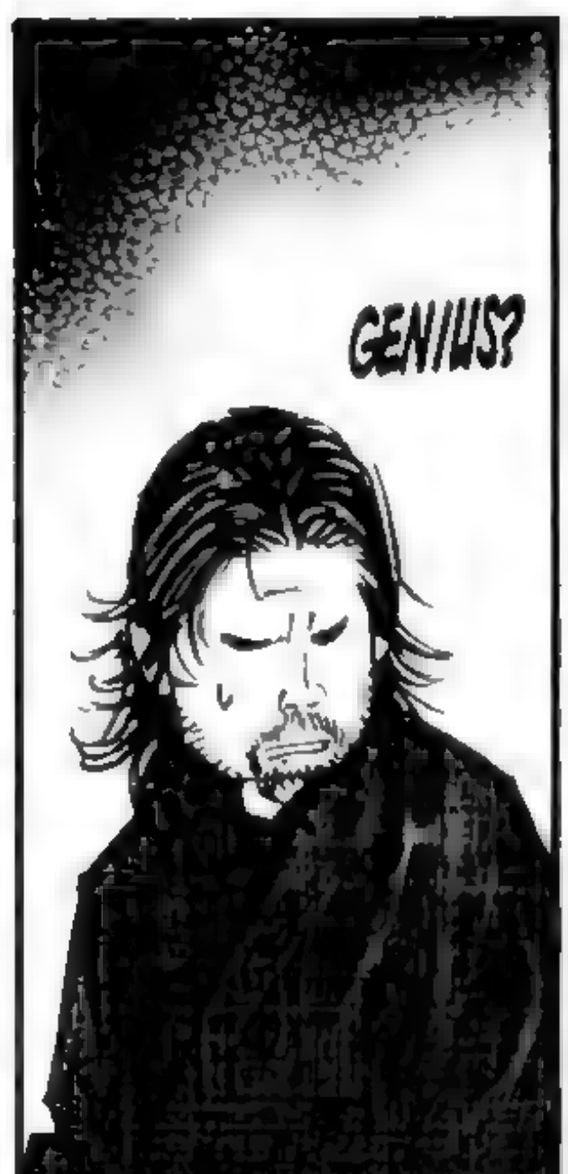
...THE PATH THAT YOU TWO ATTEMPT TO TRAVERSE.
MOST PEOPLE COULDN'T EVEN IMAGINE...

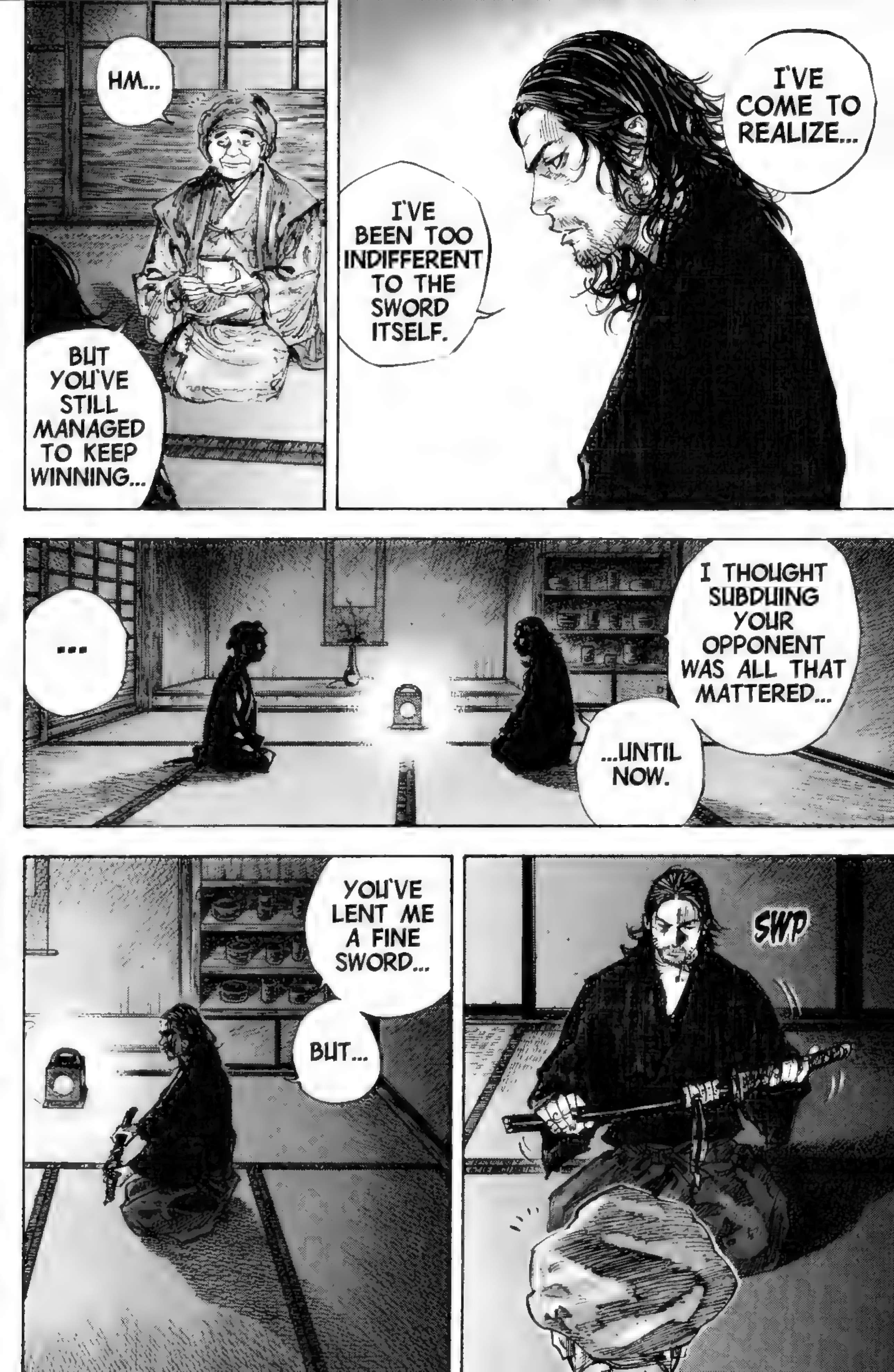
GLEAM
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK...

I HOPE THIS ENCOUNTER HAS GIVEN YOU BOTH SOME RESPITE FROM THE SOLITUDE OF SUCH A PURSUIT.

SGHNORRR

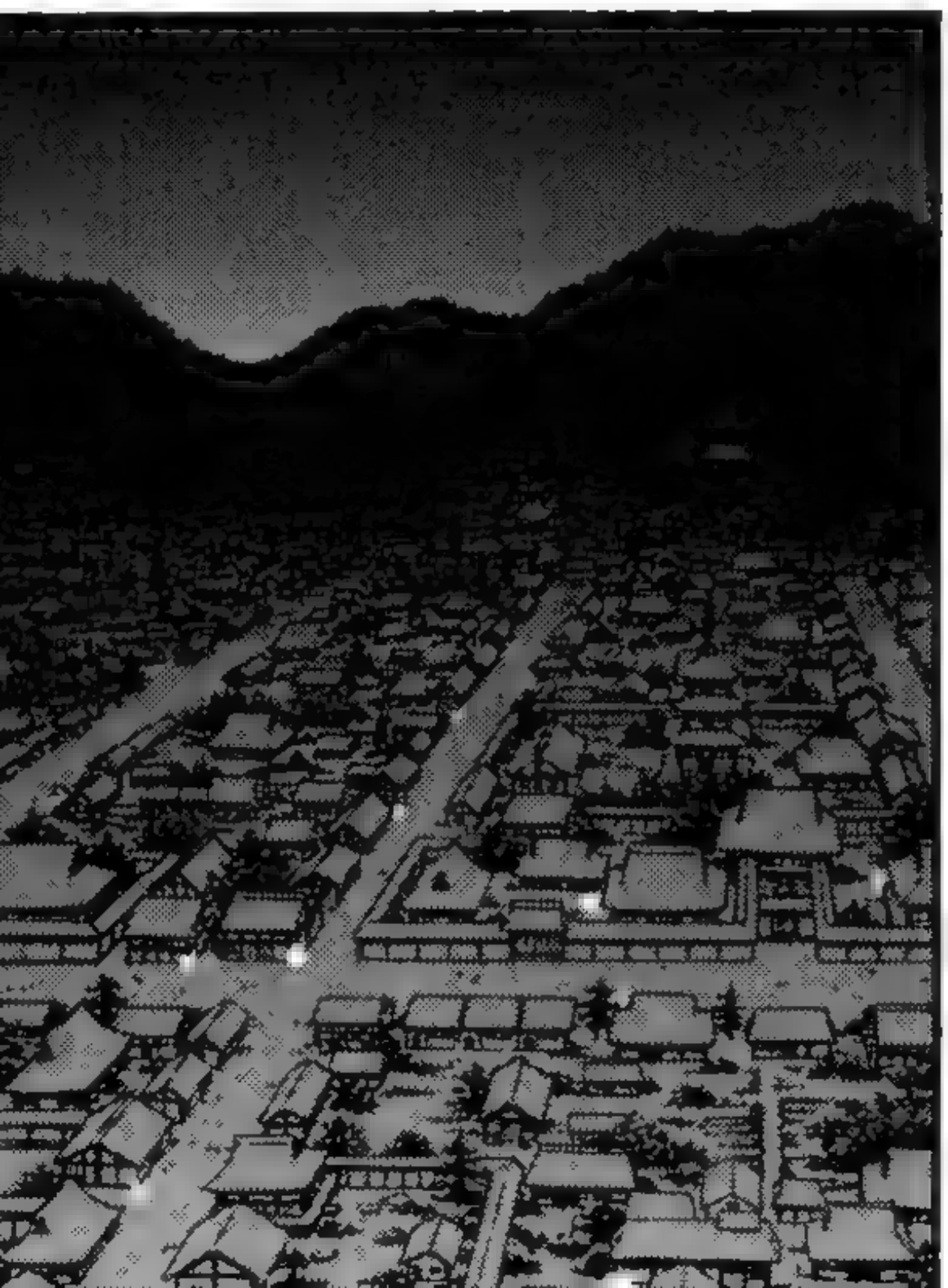
ZZZZZZZZZ




HM...
BUT YOU'VE STILL MANAGED TO KEEP WINNING...
I'VE BEEN TOO INDIFFERENT TO THE SWORD ITSELF.
I'VE COME TO REALIZE...
...
I THOUGHT SUBDUING YOUR OPPONENT WAS ALL THAT MATTERED...
...UNTIL NOW.
YOU'VE LENT ME A FINE SWORD...
BUT...
SWP

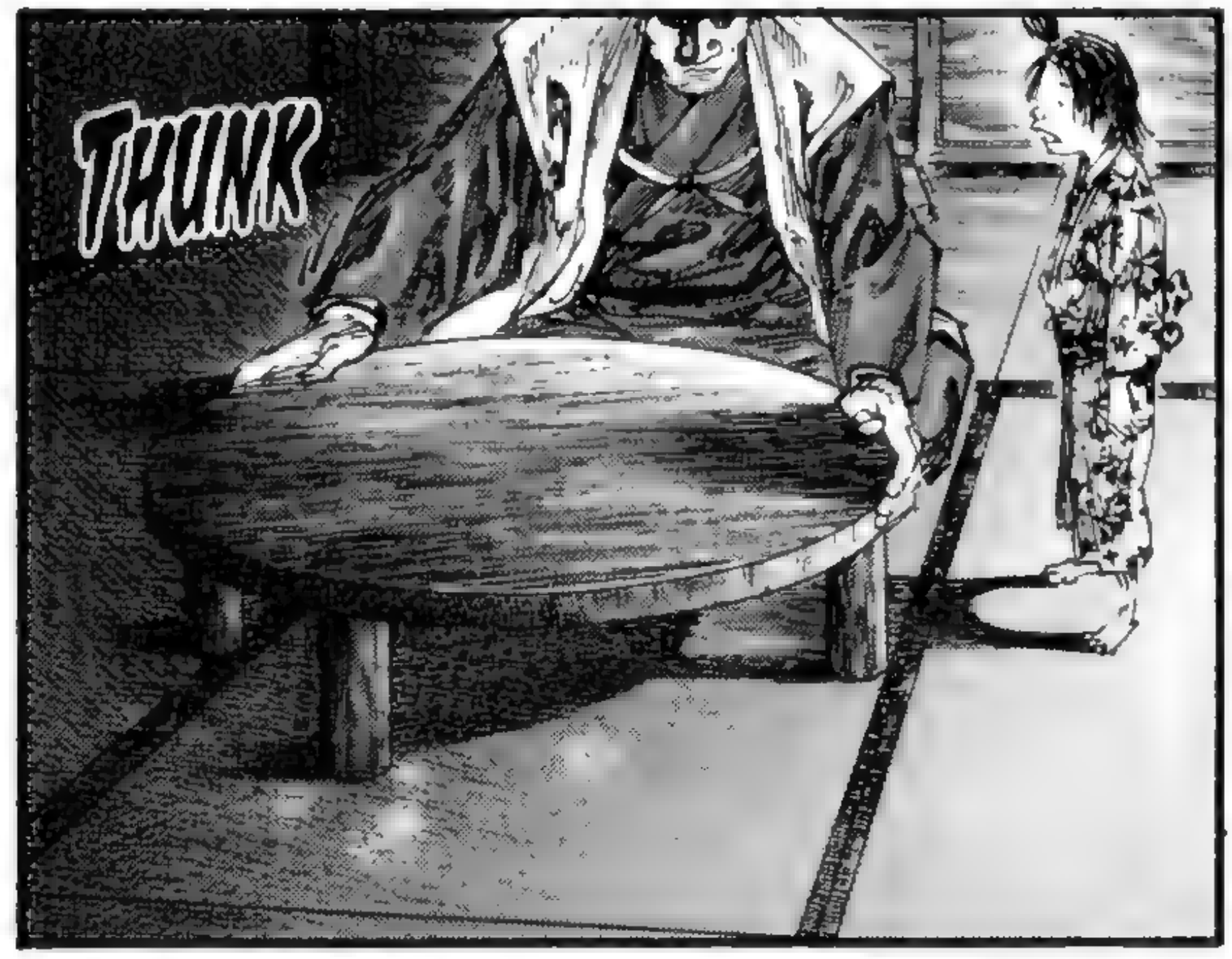
...FOR YOU TO FINISH POLISHING MY OWN SWORD FOR TOMORROW'S DUEL?

WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE ...



YAE.
BRING YOUR FATHER HIS TRAY.

OKAY.
WAIT, YAE.


THUNK

?

...LET'S HAVE OUR MEAL ON THIS TABLE.

TONIGHT...

WE'LL EAT TOGETHER.

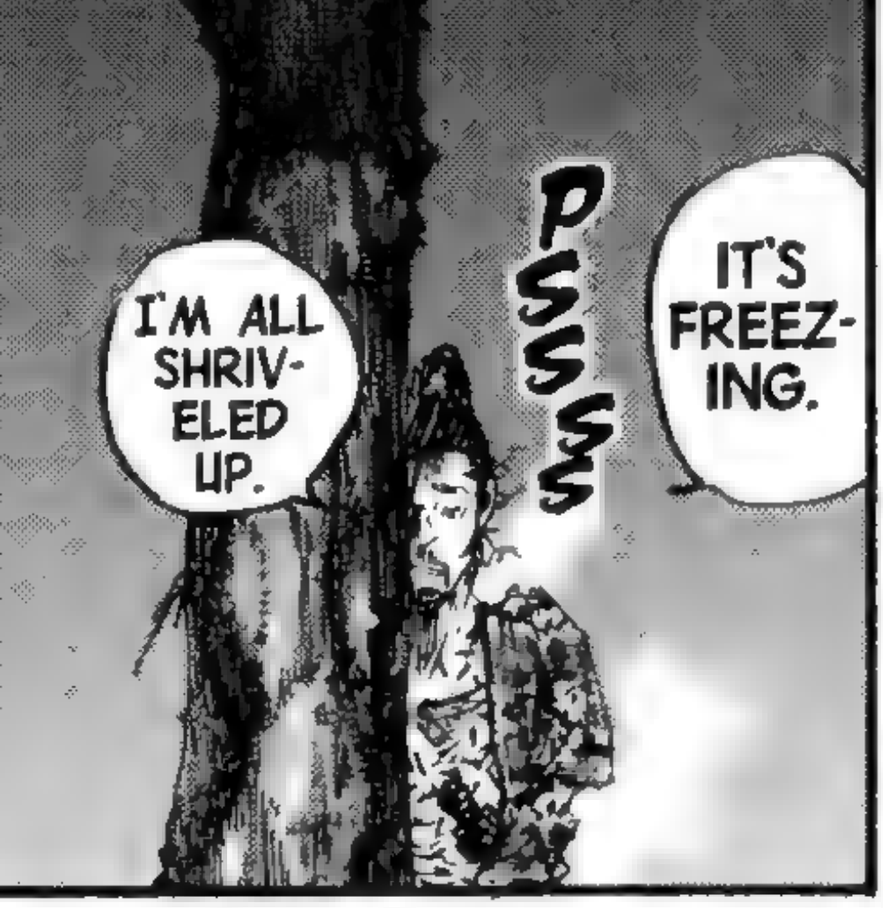
FWOOSH

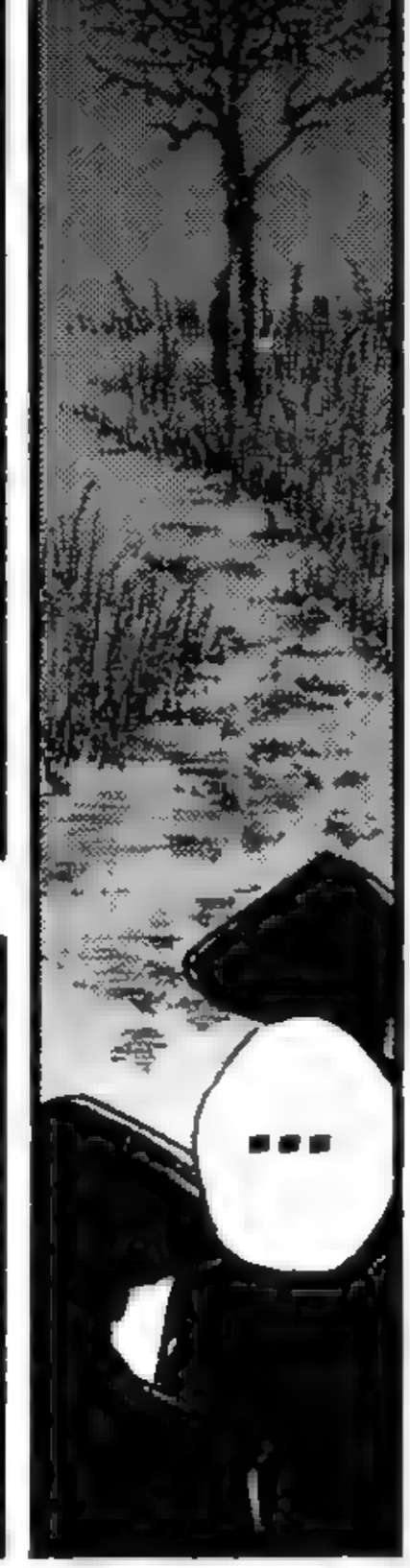
AND I'M STARVING.
FICH
FICH
FICH
I'M ALL OUT OF MONEY.
DAMN IT...

...
FICH.
FICH

GRRR
I SHOULD HAVE HIT THE YOSHIOKA UP FOR SOME MONEY BEFORE I RAN OFF...

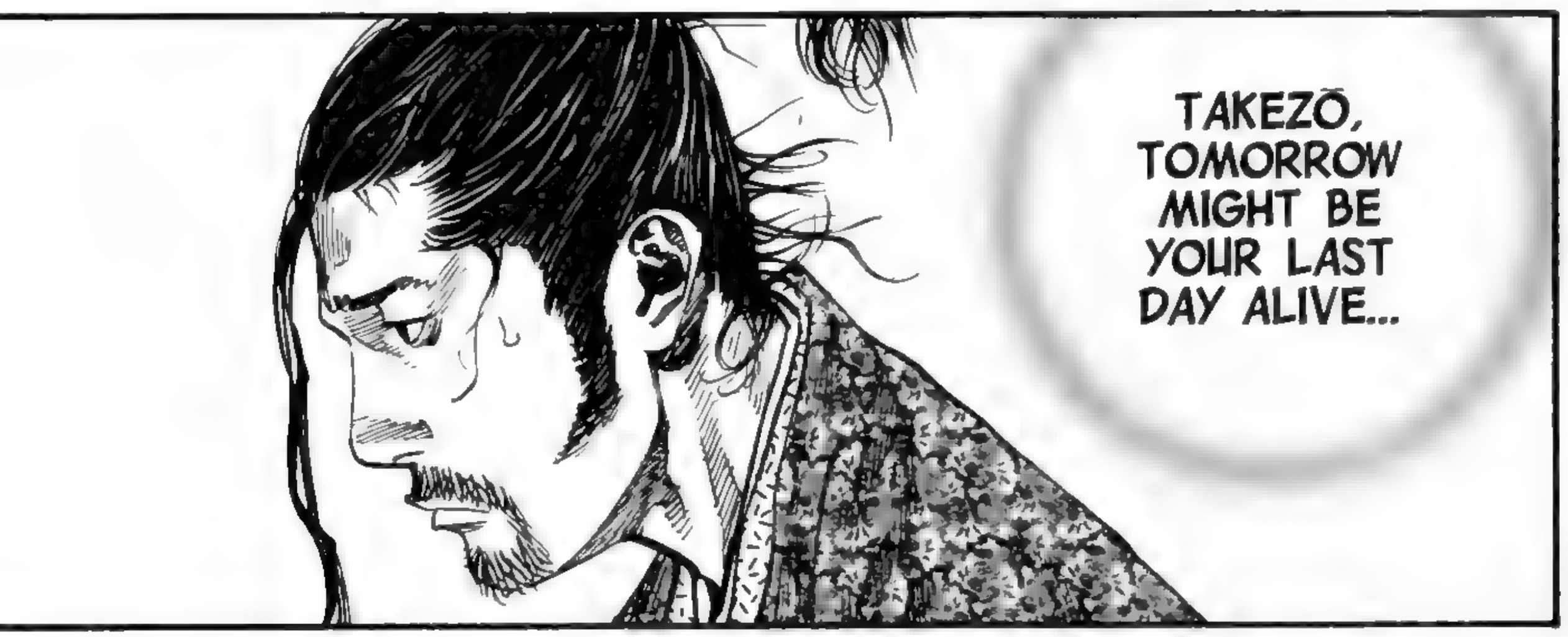
THE YOSHIOKA MUST BE AFTER YOU LIKE A PACK OF WOLVES.
HAAHH
WHERE'D YOU GO, KOJIRŌ?


I'M ALL SHRIVELED UP.
PSSSS
IT'S FREEZING.


...

THEY'RE PLANNING TO MAKE YOU TAKE DENSHI-CHIRŌ'S PLACE.
PSSSS
BRR!
AFTER ALL, TOMORROW'S THE DAY...

I WONDER WHAT TAKEZŌ IS DOING.
IS HE NERVOUS ABOUT TOMORROW?


TAKEZŌ, TOMORROW MIGHT BE YOUR LAST DAY ALIVE...

!!

WHERE'S KOJIRŌ?
COME WITH US.
ALL DONE, KOUJIRŌ?

DASH

TMP

...

YOU BASTARD!

GET BACK HERE!!

SHF

SHF

UNGH!

...!

THWAK

OW...

WHAT THE --!?

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!

...

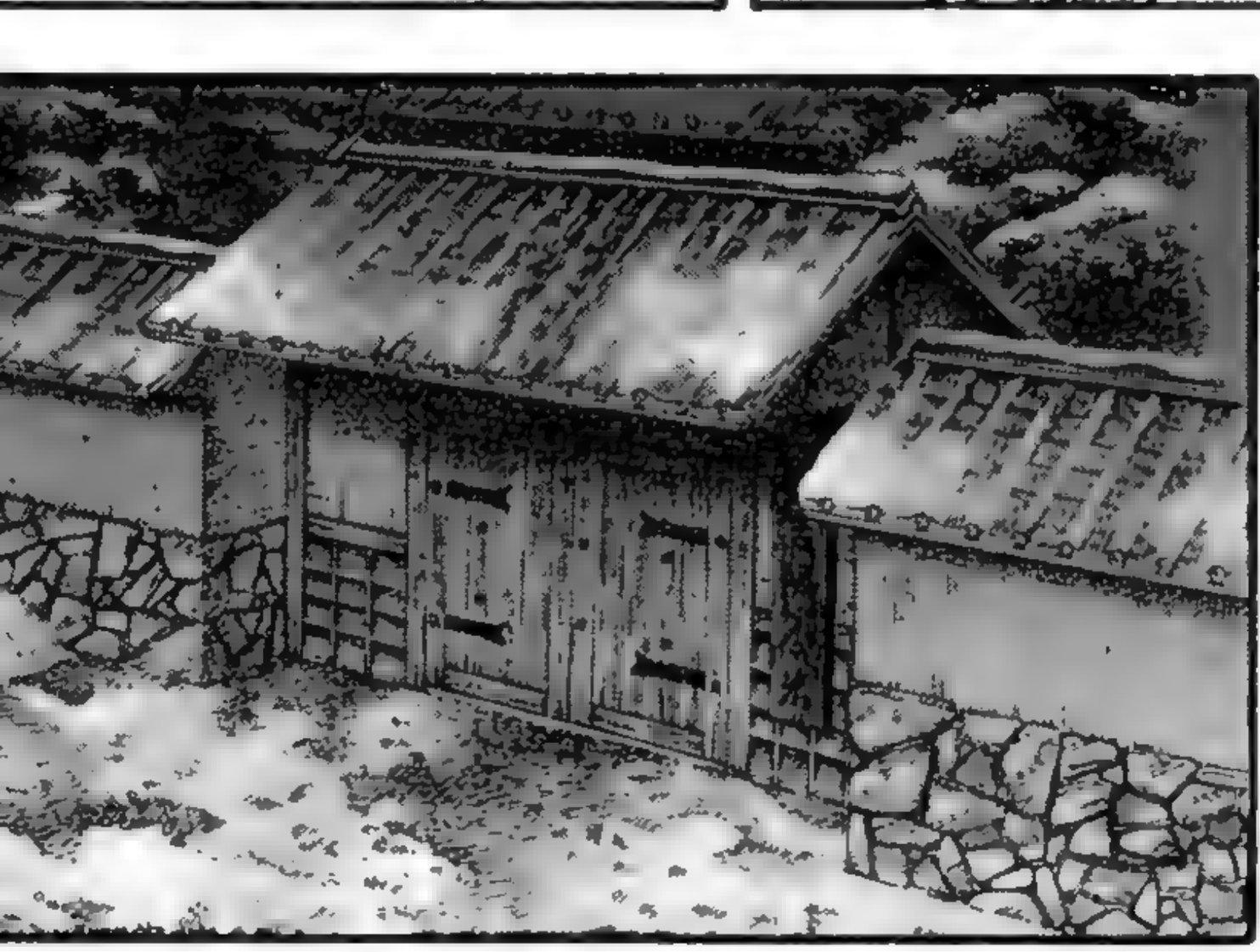
DID KOJIRŌ RUN AWAY TOO?

RUNNING OFF LIKE THAT!

WHERE IS HE!?

THOK
AHH!
DAMN YOU...

YOU TAKE US FOR FOOLS!?



COME ON!
SHF
SHF
SHF

DENSHI-CHIRŌ SENSEI.

ICHIAR

THWAK
WE CAN'T SEEM TO LOCATE UEDA...

UEDA'S NO LONGER WITH US.

LISTEN UP...
?!

THWAK
THWAK

THWAK
I WON'T LET ANYONE TAKE MY PLACE.
IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN...

THWAK
THWAK
...

NO ONE KNOWS THE HISTORY OF THE YOSHIOKA MORE THAN THIS BOULDER.

SEIJŪRŌ'S SWORD.

MY FATHER'S SWORD. GENERATIONS CHISELED AWAY AT THIS BOULDER.

THWAK

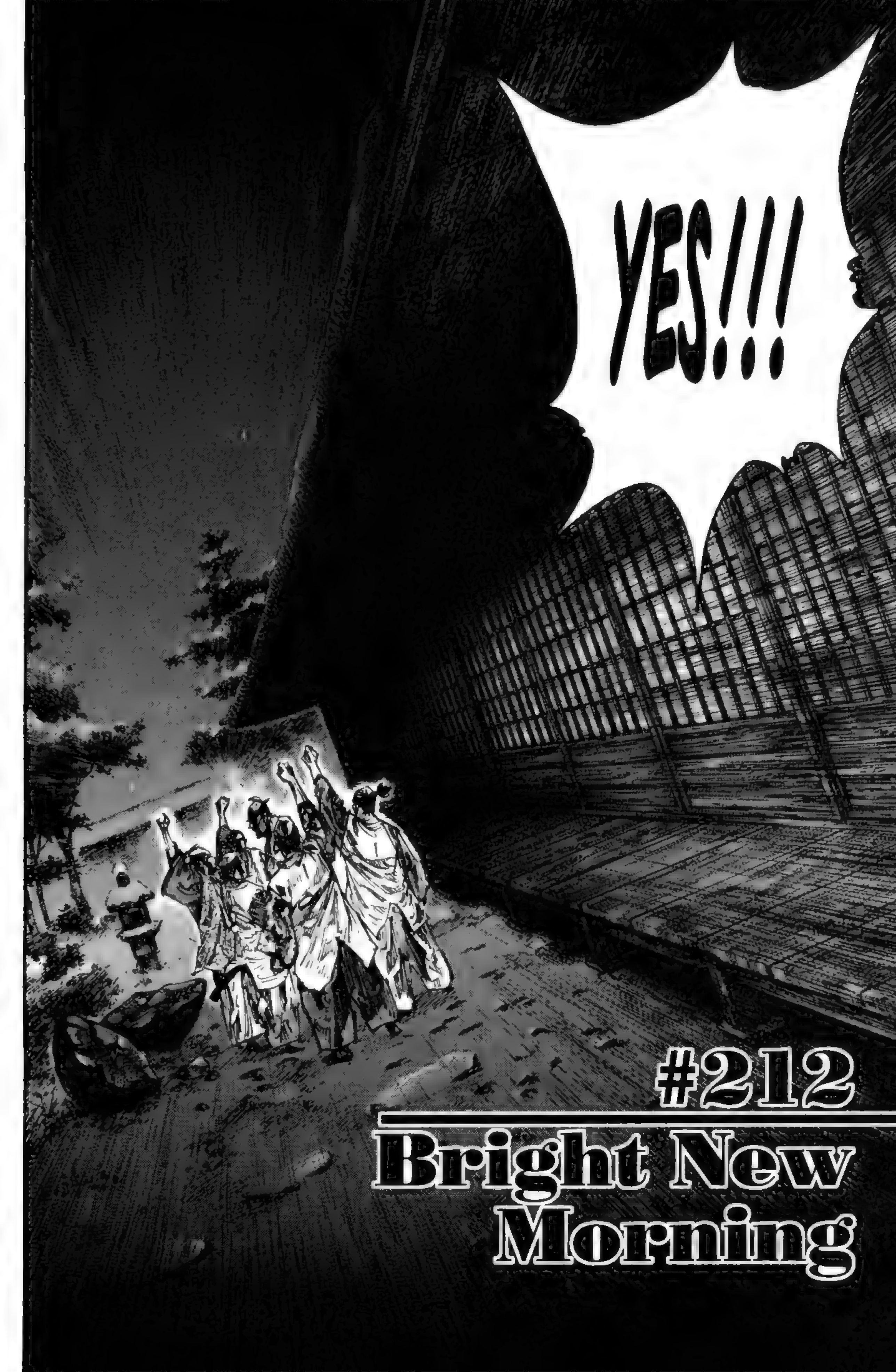
HUF
HUF
PERHAPS THIS STONE...
...CAN PREDICT THE OUTCOME OF TOMORROW'S MATCH.

TAHAK

YAH!

KRAKKP
!!
KATHUD

.....
HUF
HUF
HUF
BELIEVE IN ME...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HAVE FAITH.
I'M GOING TO WIN!!



#212
Bright New Morning

KAWW

KAWW

SO TODAY IS YOUR MATCH.
IT DOESN'T SEEM TO FAZE YOU AT ALL.
YOU THINK SO?

FULL.
KLK

SLUURRP

YOUR MEALS ARE AMAZING.
THANK YOU.
YOU EXAGGER-ATE.

I'M FINISHED WITH YOUR SWORD.

MUSASHI...

NO PLAN
I'M THINKING EAST-WARD.
WHERE DO YOU PLAN TO GO?
IF I MANAGE TO SURVIVE THE MATCH, I'M PLANNING ON LEAVING KYOTO IMMEDIATELY.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPI-TALITY.
LOOKING FOR KOJIRŌ?
GLEAM
GLEAM
...
HE MAY STILL BE SLEEPING.
COME VISIT US FOR THE NEXT NEW YEAR...
GLEAM
MYŌSHU ...
I HAVE NO BUSI-NESS WITH HIM...
I WASN'T LOOKING FOR HIM...
MUSASHI !
.....

GRAB

GLARE

THAT IS IF YOU'RE ALIVE.

RUN AWAY IF YOU LIKE, IT'S JUST A SILLY FIGHT.

....!

FICH

TUGG

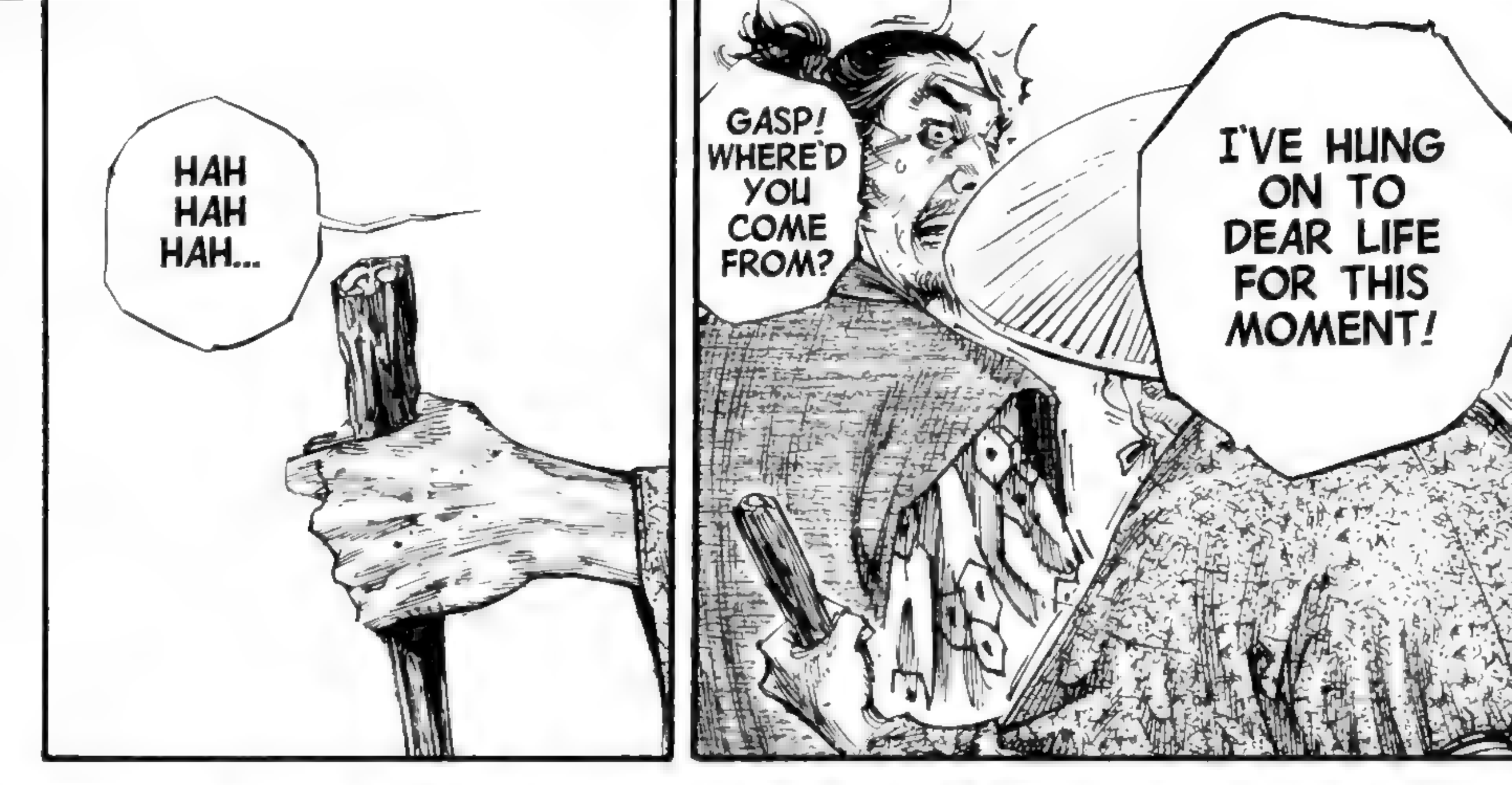
AUHH!

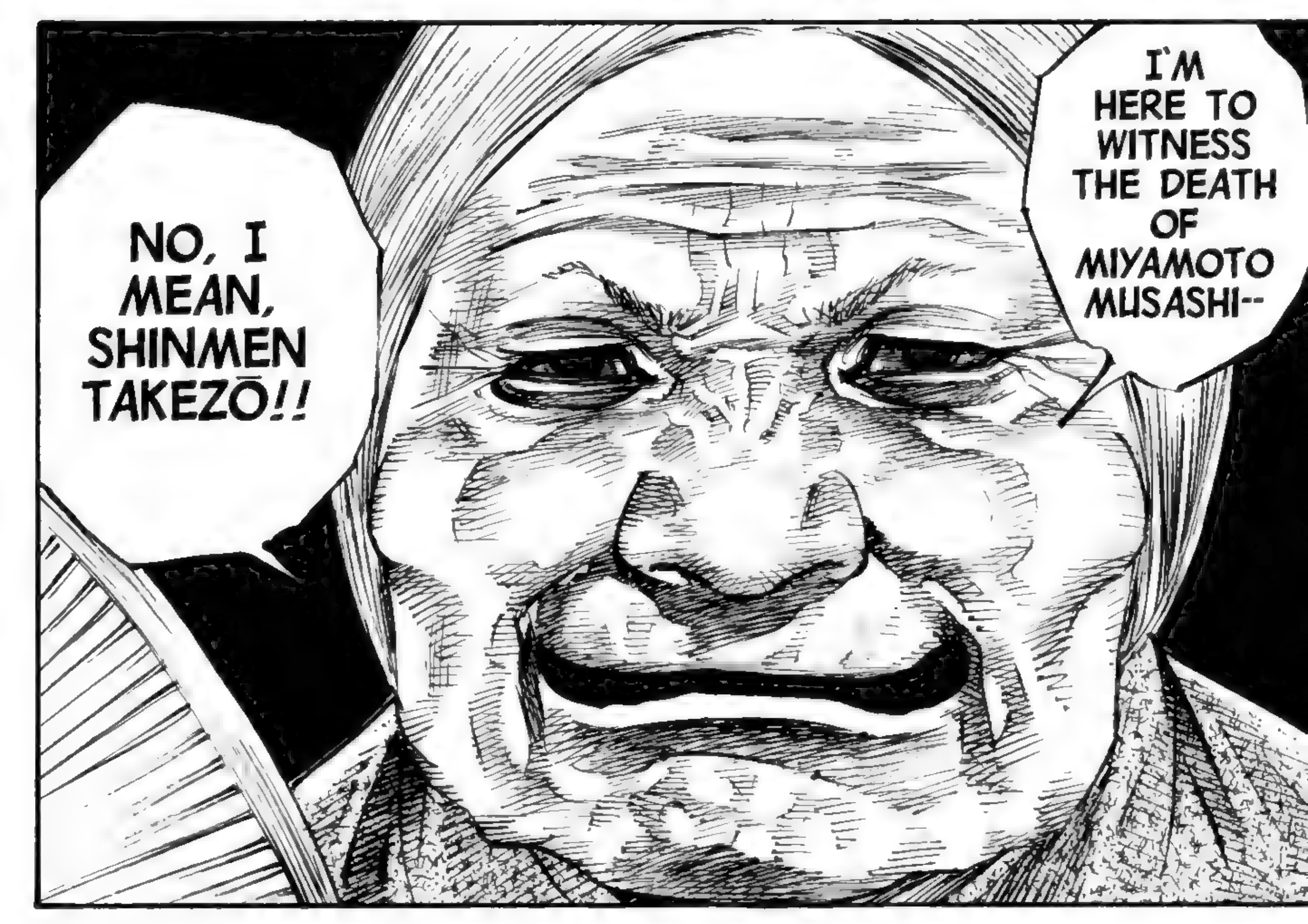
FICH

FICH

FICH

FICH


HAH HAH HAH...
GASP! WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?
I'VE HUNG ON TO DEAR LIFE FOR THIS MOMENT!


NO, I MEAN, SHINMEN TAKEZŌ!!
I'M HERE TO WITNESS THE DEATH OF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI--

OWW!
DEN--
KRIK

I MUST SEND MY POSITIVE ENERGY TO MASTER DENSHI-CHIRŌ!
HEE HEE!

YOU CAN DO IT!
GO, DENSHI-CHIRŌ!

FICH
FICH

FICH

FICH

WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

HM?

MIYA-MOTO...

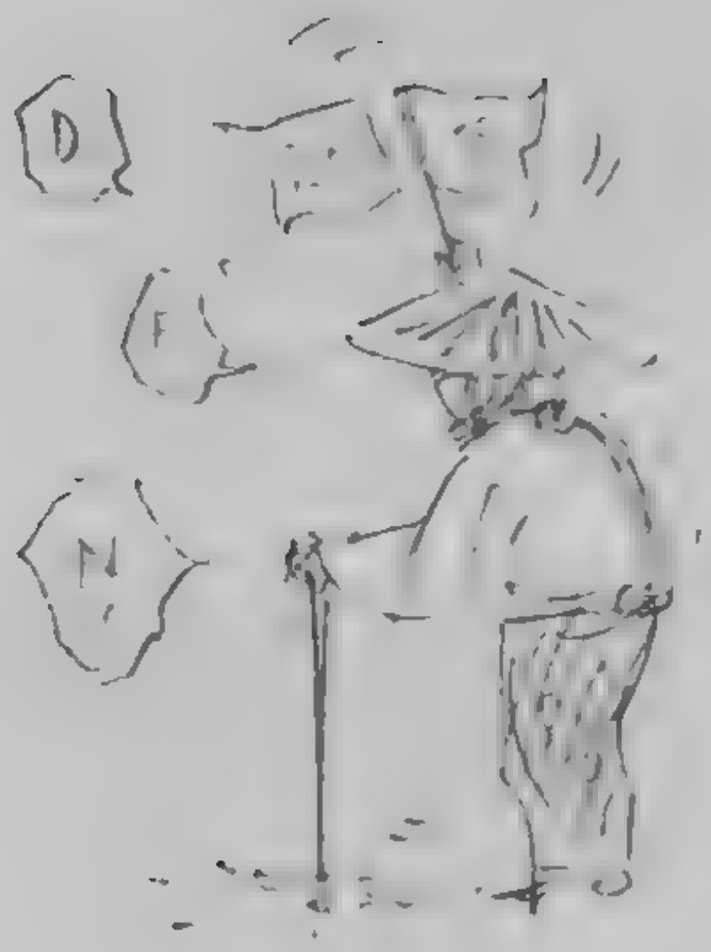
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

HELLO, UEDA...

YES...

ACTUALLY, IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW DAYS...

Vagabond

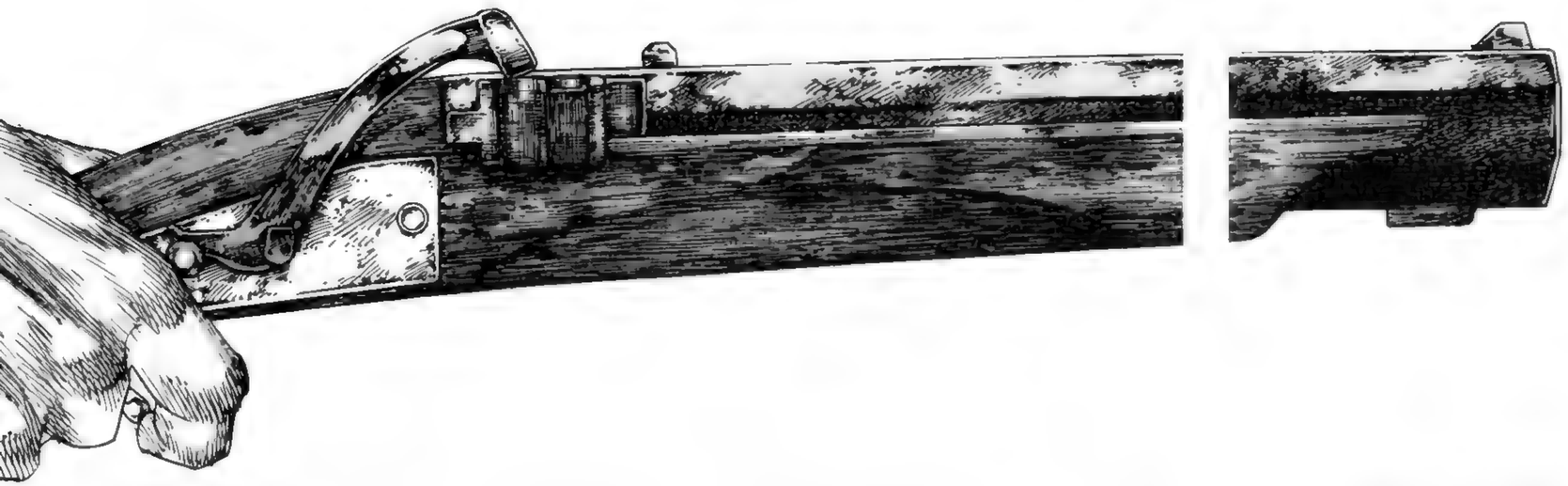


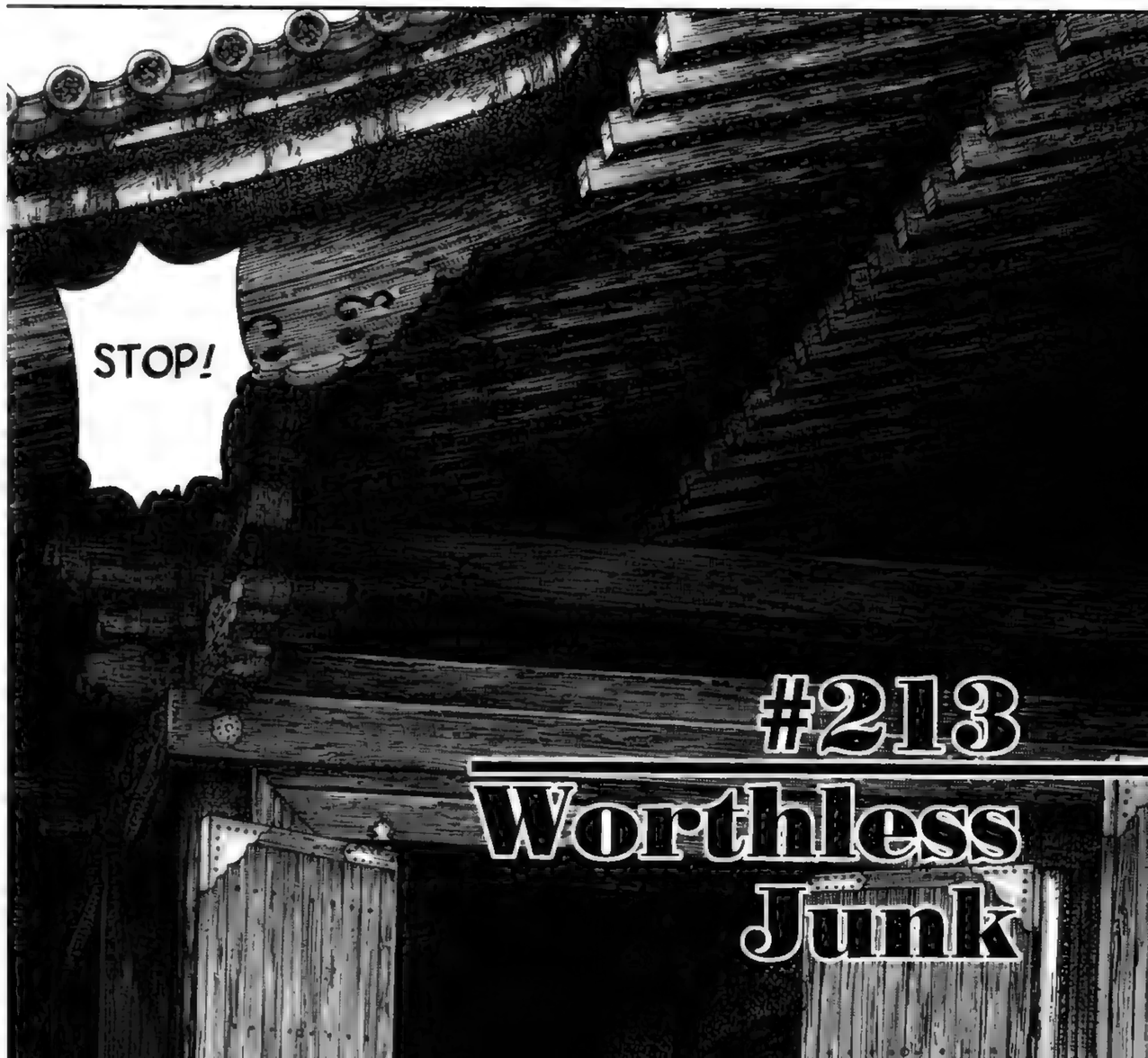
MIYAMOTO.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

HELLO, UEDA...

YES.





#213
Worthless Junk

THERE'S DENSHICHIRŌ. HE'S HUGE...

SCARY.

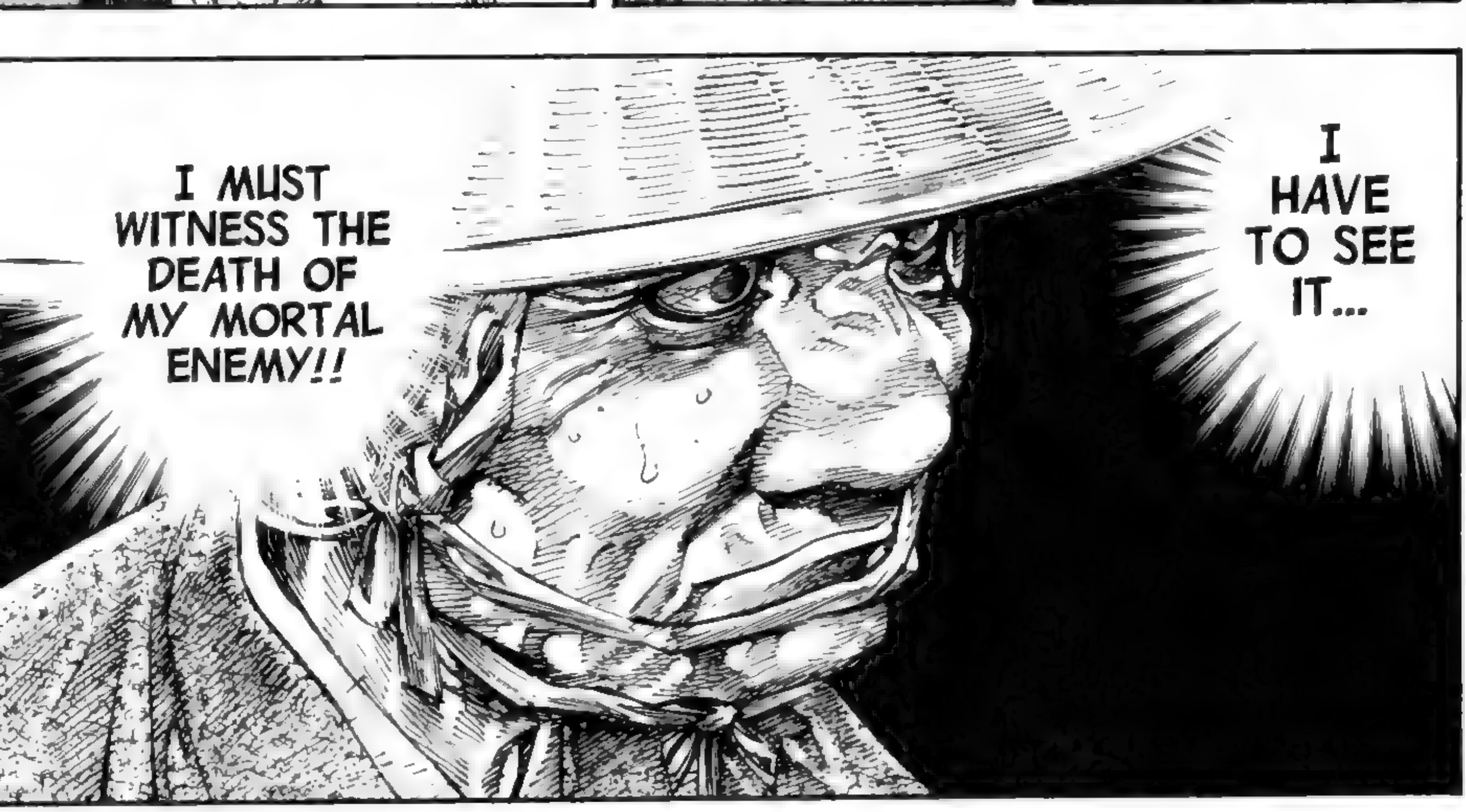
MRMR

MRMR

FOOP
HUF HUF
MUST GET TO THE FRONT!

STOP PUSHING.
YOU OLD HAG!

ARGH.


I MUST WITNESS THE DEATH OF MY MORTAL ENEMY!!
I HAVE TO SEE IT...

LOOK AT THIS!
IT'S SO CROWDED, OTSU!
LET'S MOVE UP FRONT!

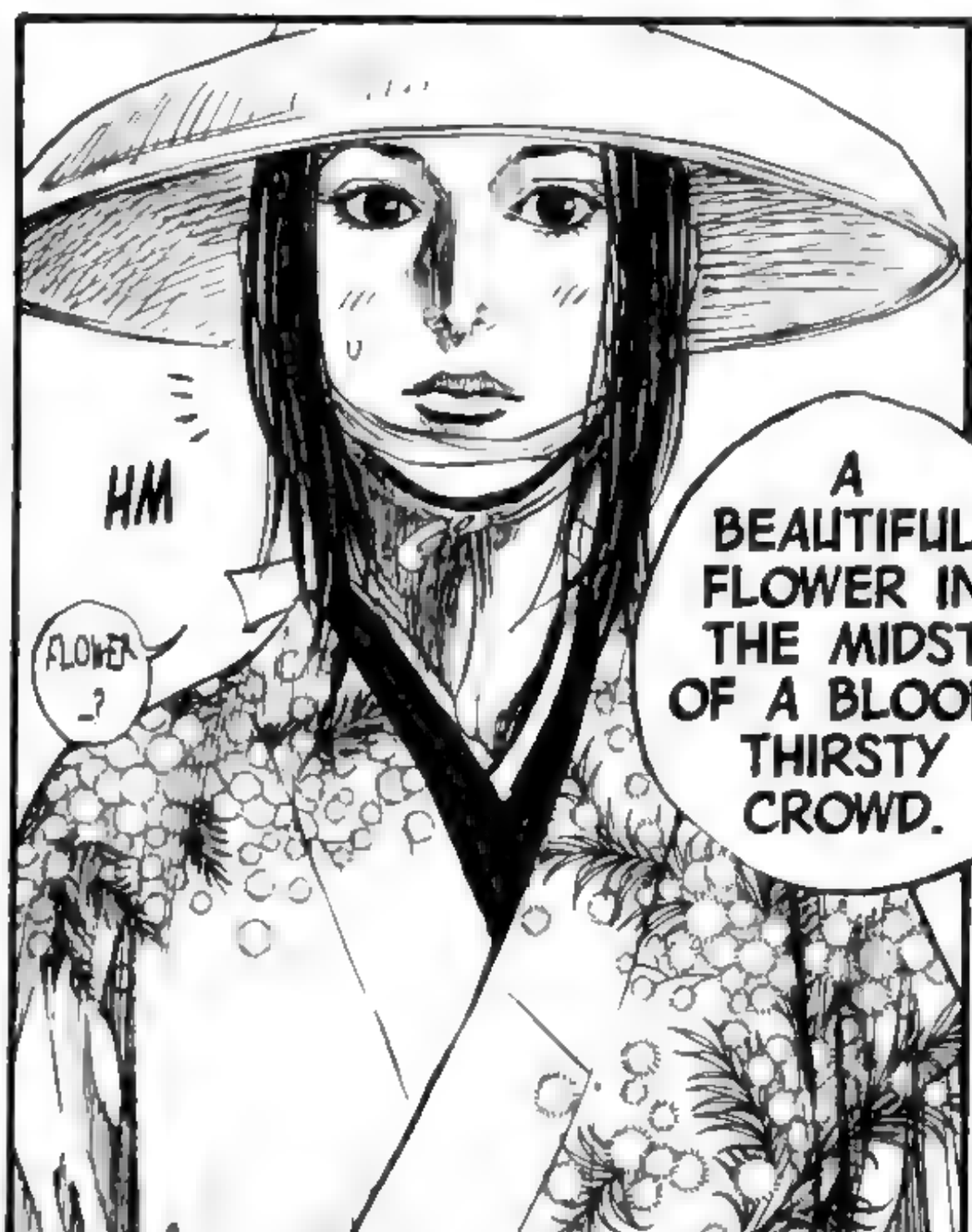
WHAT'S TAKING THEM?
IT'S COLD.
MRMRR
MUTTER
MURMUR

BUT WE CAN'T SEE A THING FROM HERE!

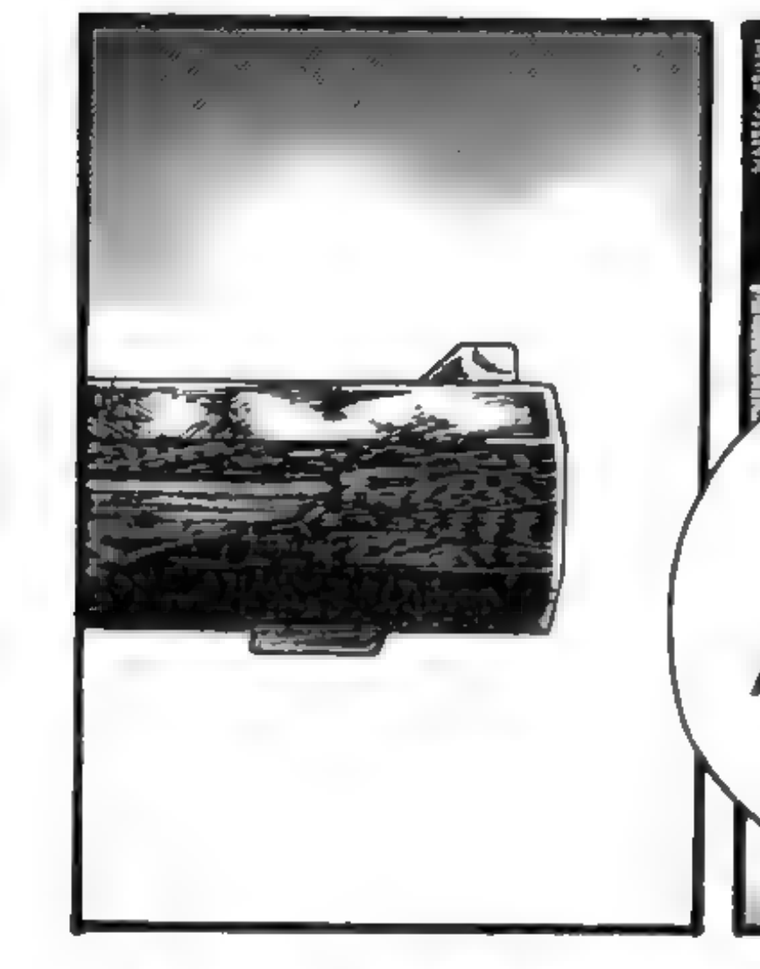
THAT'S OKAY, TARŌ!

LET'S STAY HERE!

YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO, BUT I'M HIS DISCIPLE. I HAVE TO GO UP THERE AND SEE MY MASTER!



.....
SO MUCH ADO, AND THE NEW YEAR'S ONLY JUST ARRIVED.
WELL THEN, WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE, MONK?
MUTTER
MUTTER
COULD WATCHING A MAN BEING CUT DOWN REALLY BE SO INTER-ESTING?
HM?
WHAT KIND OF MONK AM I IF I DON'T TAKE CARE OF THE DEAD.



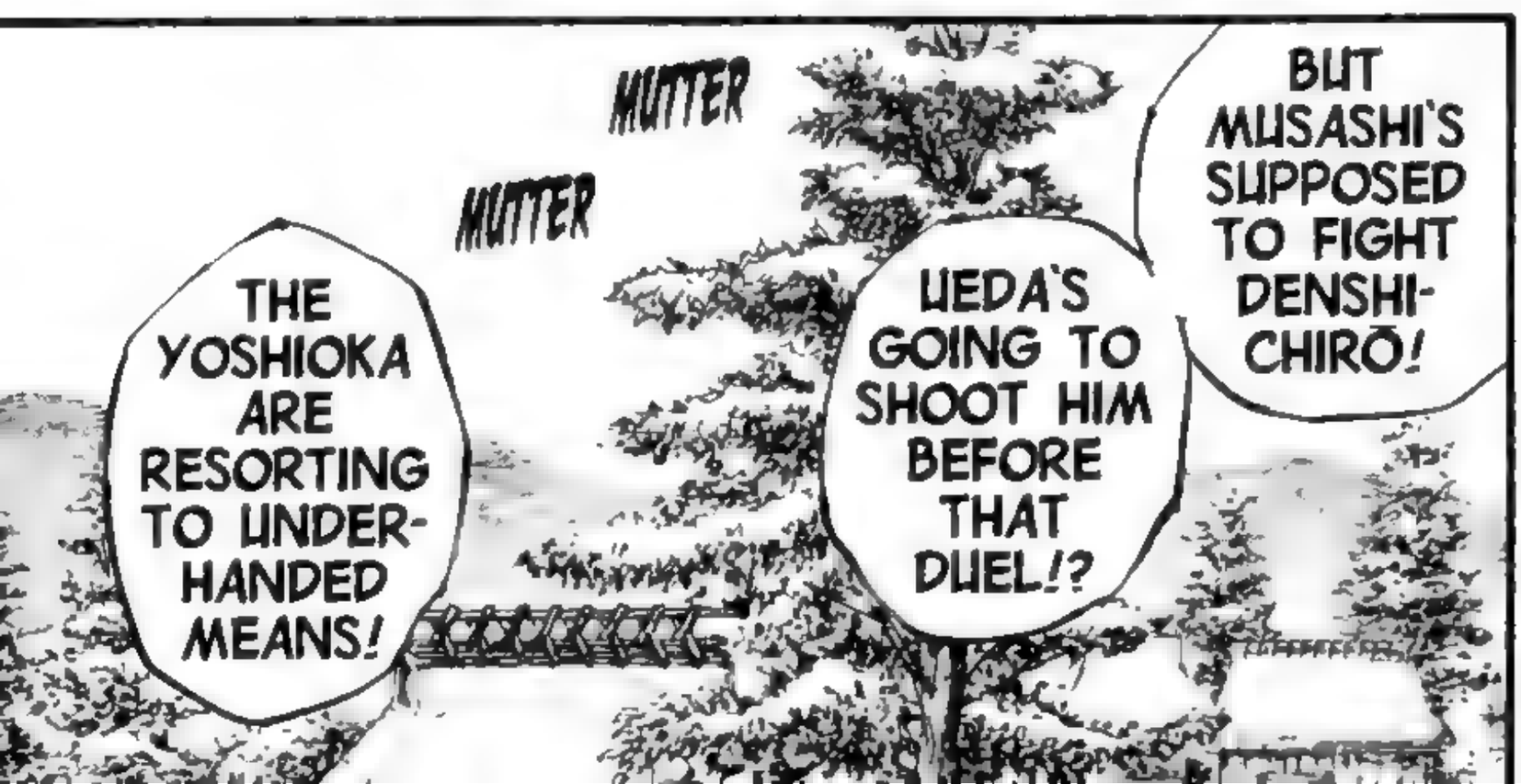
JUST TURN AROUND.

WHAT ?
WALK AWAY. LEAVE KYOTO.

WHAT !?
THAT IS MUSASHI !
HEY!

IF YOU DO, WE'LL NEVER HAVE TO SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.

AND THAT'S UEDA RYŌHEI, THE SENIOR DISCIPLE OF THE YOSHIOKA !!
HE'S HOLDING A GUN!
WOW!


MUTTER
MUTTER
THE YOSHIOKA ARE RESORTING TO UNDER-HANDED MEANS!
UEDA'S GOING TO SHOOT HIM BEFORE THAT DUEL!?
BUT MUSASHI'S SUPPOSED TO FIGHT DENSHI-CHIRŌ!

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING ?
I CAN'T HEAR THEM.

IT WAS YOUR VULGAR AMBITION.

THINK ABOUT IT.

WHAT STARTED ALL THIS?

EVERYONE KNOWS WHO KILLED SEIJŪRŌ.

AND NOW YOU GOT WHAT YOU WANTED.

THIS NEWS HAS SPREAD EVEN BEYOND KYOTO.

YOUR AMBITION WAS FULFILLED.

TAKE ONE MORE STEP AND YOU'LL REGRET IT.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

I'D BE MORE AFRAID OF YOU IF YOU WERE WIELDING A WOODEN STICK.

UEDA...

FWSH
TMP

...

FIREARMS DON'T SUIT YOU!

HMPH

.....

SMIRK

I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO USE IT.

OF COURSE NOT. THIS PIECE OF JUNK.

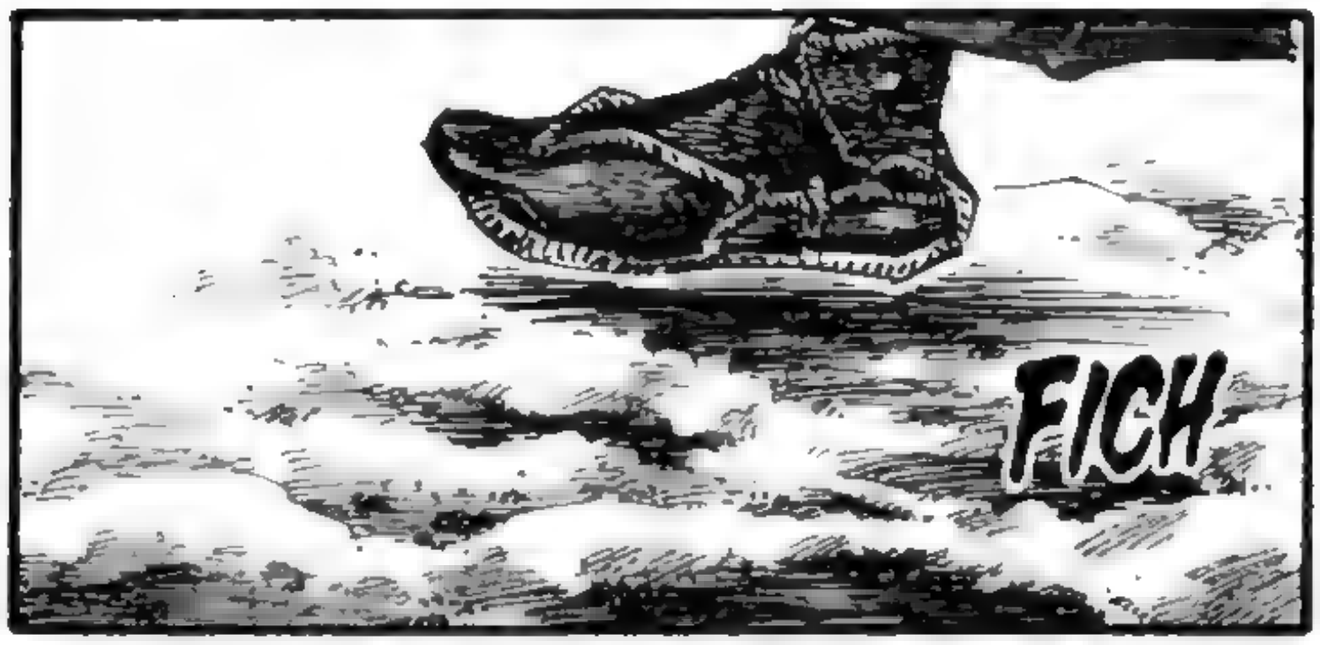
I THINK IT'S BROKEN ANYWAY.

KTUNK

I THOUGHT SO.

WHAT CAN I...?

WHAT CAN I DO...?


FICH

FICH
MUSASHI.

FICH
...

I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN...
PLEASE FORGET ABOUT THE MATCH AND LEAVE KYOTO.

LET ME TELL YOU THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEIJŪRŌ AND DENSHICHIRŌ.

...?

FICH

IF YOU SUCCEED IN CUTTING DOWN DEN-SHICHIRŌ...

...THEN WE *WILL* SEEK OUT VENGEANCE.
THAT WILL BECOME THE SOLE PURPOSE OF EVERY LAST DISCIPLE OF THE YOSHIOKA.
FICH
FICH
FICH

FICH

FICH

I'M COUNTING ON YOU, MASTER DENSHICHIRŌ !!
I HOPE YOU SPLIT THAT BASTARD'S HEAD OPEN!!

SHE'S A TOUGH ONE.
SHE LOOKS STRONGER THAN BEFORE.
HOPE SHE DOESN'T COLLAPSE RIGHT AFTER MUSASHI'S DEATH.
THAT'S BEEN HER SOLE PURPOSE IN LIFE.
I'M GLAD SHE LOOKS HEALTHY AND WELL.
SWP
AH! THERE'S THAT OLD HAG!
...
HIDE, OTSŪ!!
GLANCE
...
HYUUU
HAHH
WHO'S THE OLD WOMAN?
I DON'T KNOW, SIR.

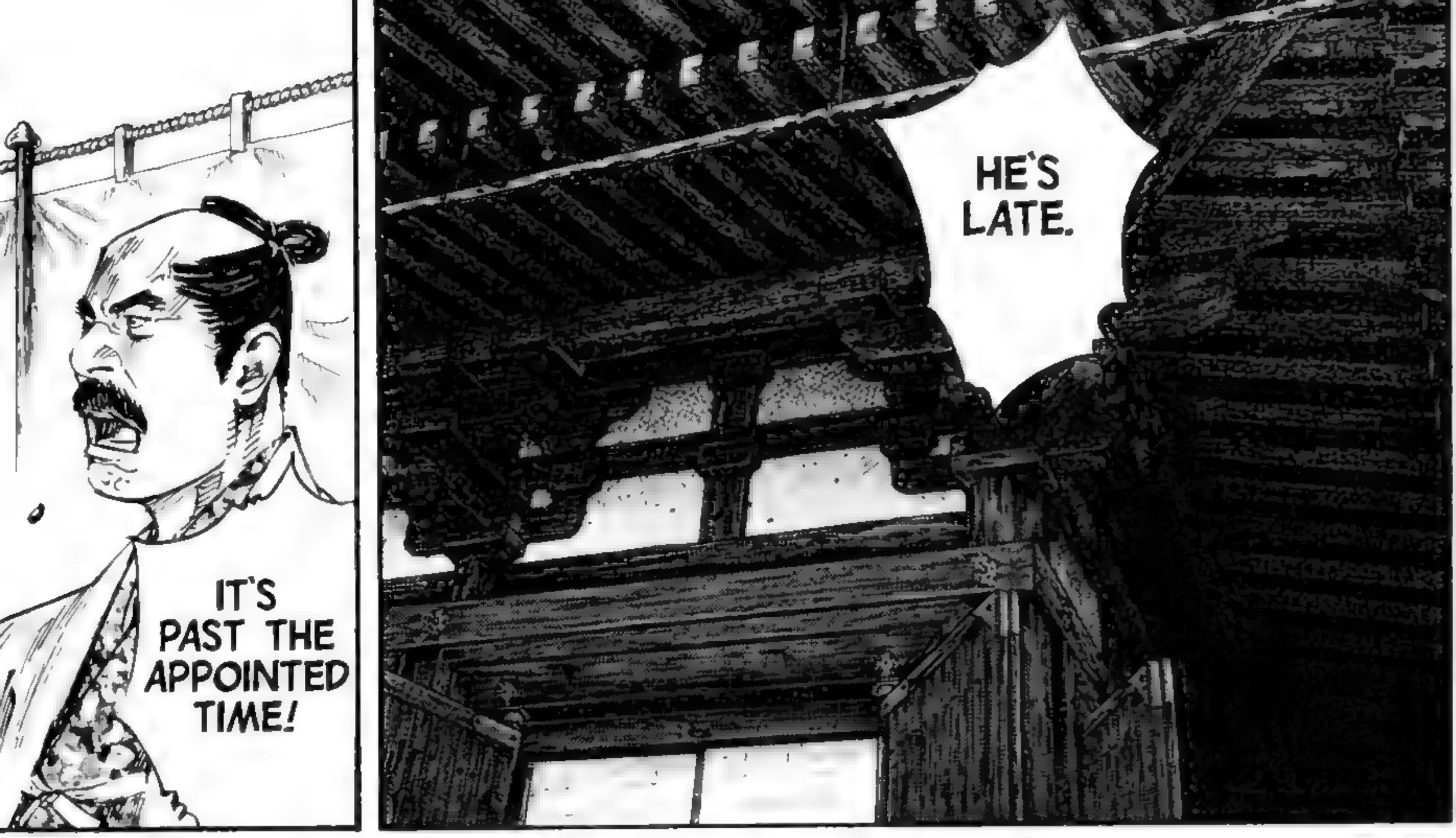
FICH
...

WHAT'S THIS BIG CROWD DOING HERE?

!!
!!!!
THMP
THMP

...
...

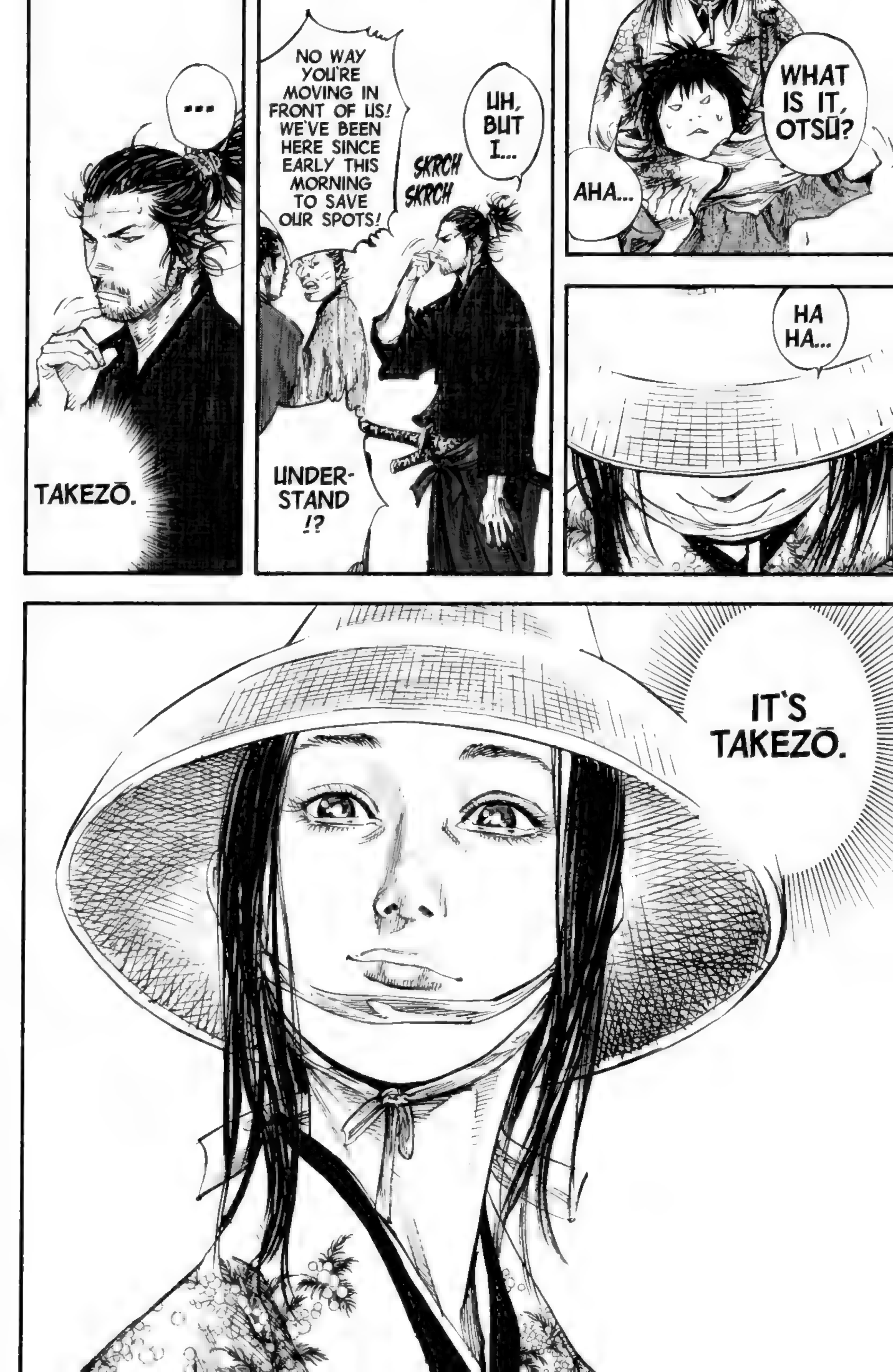
HUFF


IT'S PAST THE APPOINTED TIME!
HE'S LATE.

JUST WATCH FROM BACK THERE!
THERE'S NO ROOM!
EXCUSE ME. LET ME THROUGH.
HEY...

GRB
HUH?

HUH!? I TOLD YOU, THERE'S NO ROOM!
FORGET IT!!
JUST LET ME THROUGH.
UM, I'M NOT HERE TO WATCH...


...
TAKEZŌ.
NO WAY YOU'RE MOVING IN FRONT OF US! WE'VE BEEN HERE SINCE EARLY THIS MORNING TO SAVE OUR SPOTS!
UH, BUT I...
SKRCH SKRCH
UNDER-STAND !?
WHAT IS IT, OTSŪ?
AHA...
HA HA...
IT'S TAKEZŌ.

Vagabond

(MMF.)

YOU BASTARD!

...

WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?

MUTTER MUTTER

I'M NOT TRYING TO CUT IN FRONT OF YOU... I'M...

I TOLD YOU IT'S TOO CROWDED, YOU IDIOT!

CHATTER CHATTER

CHATTER CHATTER

HEY! YOU STEPPED ON MY FOOT!

STOP PUSHING.

CHATTER CHATTER

...

...

STOP PUSH-ING.

HEY!

TAKEZŌ...

HEY... THAT BIG GUY IS...

?!

HEY, A FIGHT'S BREAKING OUT OVER THERE.

HEY!

WHAT THE--!?

GET OUT OF MY WAY!

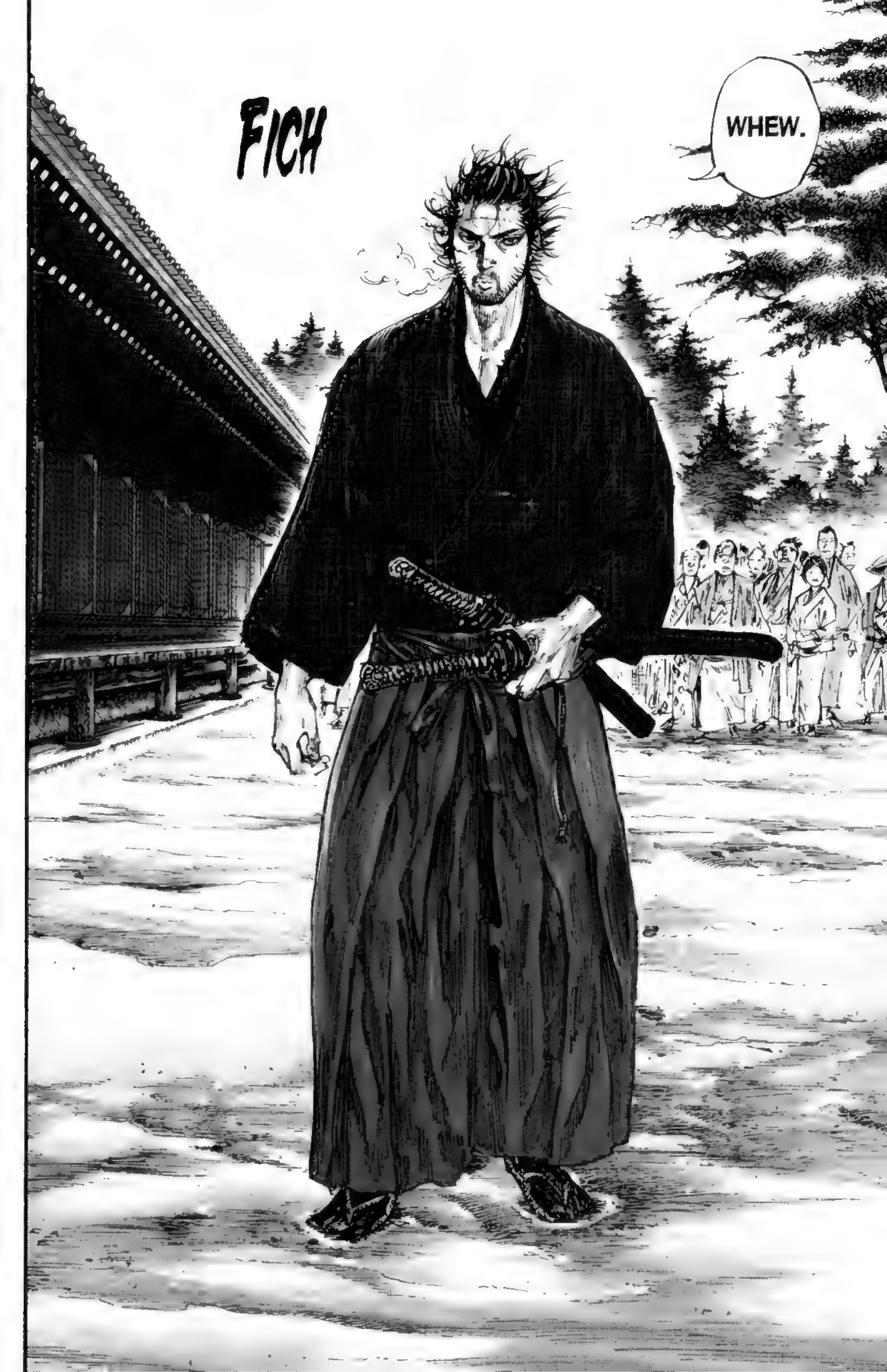
IT'S TAKEZŌ.

YOU BAS-TARD...

MUSASHI.

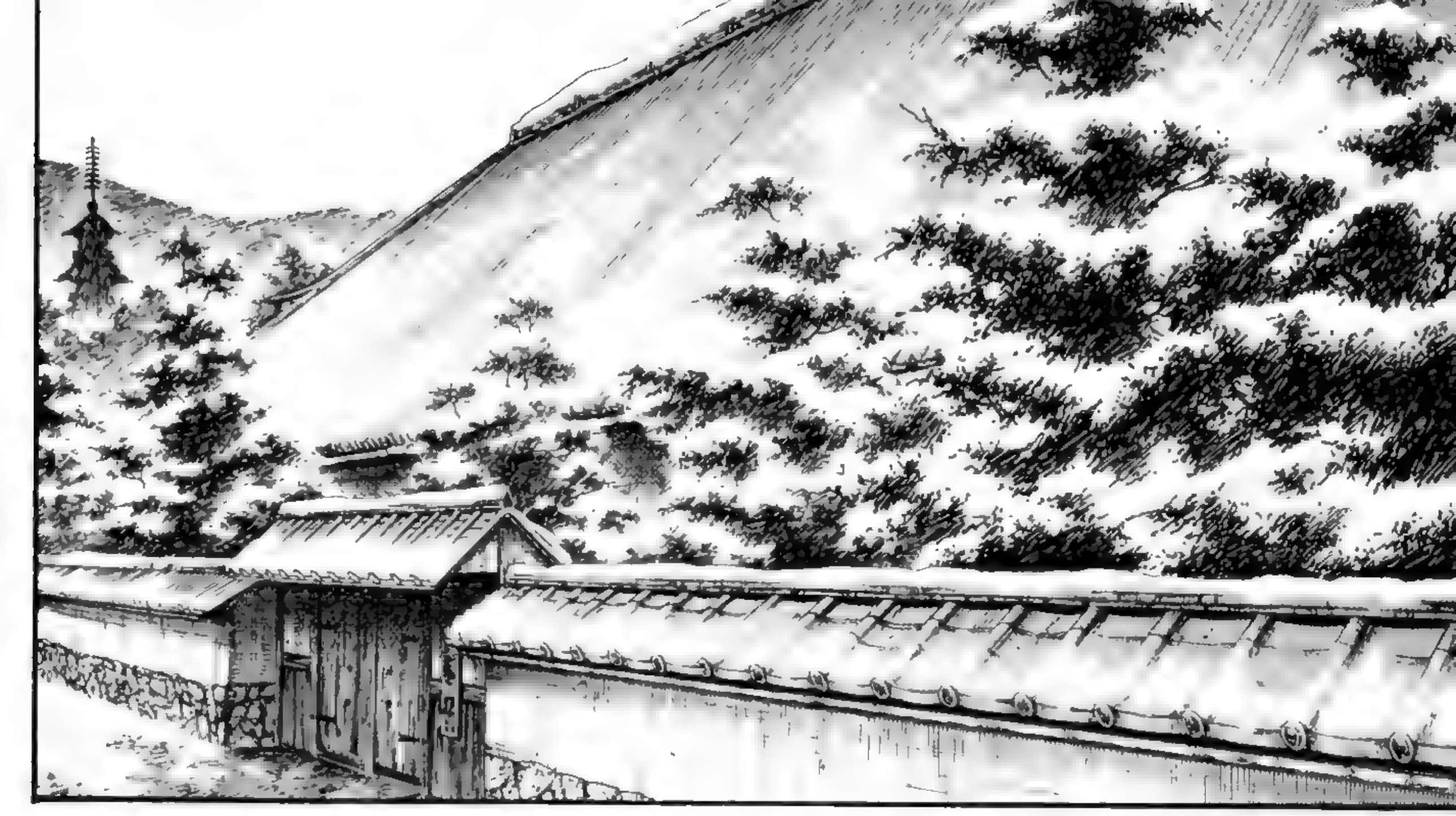
MASTER!

#214 | Rengeōin

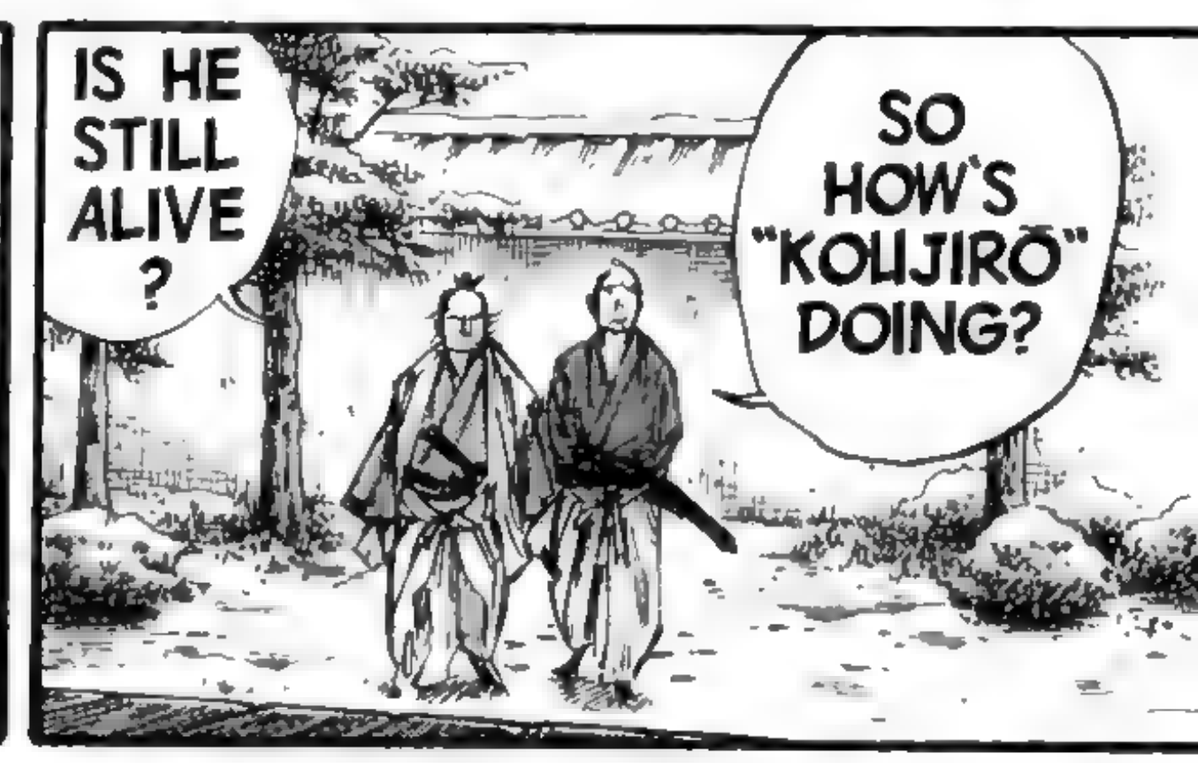

FICH
WHEW.

SHALL WE GET STARTED...

.....



MAYBE NOT.


IS HE STILL ALIVE ?
SO HOW'S "KOIJIRŌ" DOING?

THWUNK
GET UP, YOU CROOK!
...!?
DRAG HIM OUT!
THUNK
THOR

SCHNORR
SCHNORR
GEEZ, HE'S SNORING AWAY.

CARE TO EXPLAIN, "KOUJIRŌ"?

IT'S THE DAY OF THE MATCH. AND KOJIRŌ SEEMS TO HAVE RUN OFF.

WELL, THERE'S NO NEED FOR A SUBSTITUTE NOW, SO IT DOESN'T MATTER.

HAK

HAKK

NGH!

HE'S ABANDONED YOU.

SOME FRIEND HE TURNED OUT TO BE, HUH? HA HA...

HA HA HA...

HUH?

WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK?

HUF

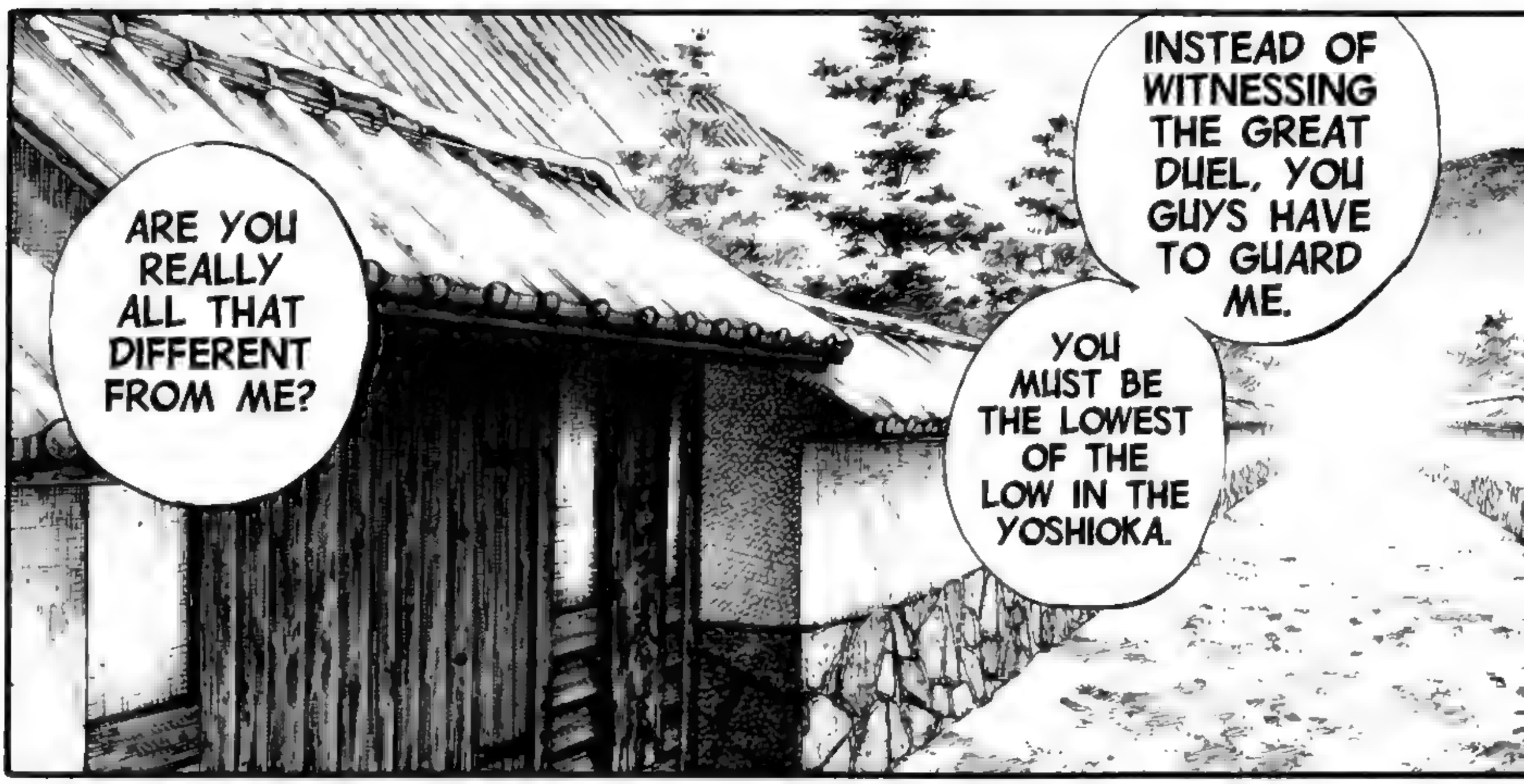
HUF

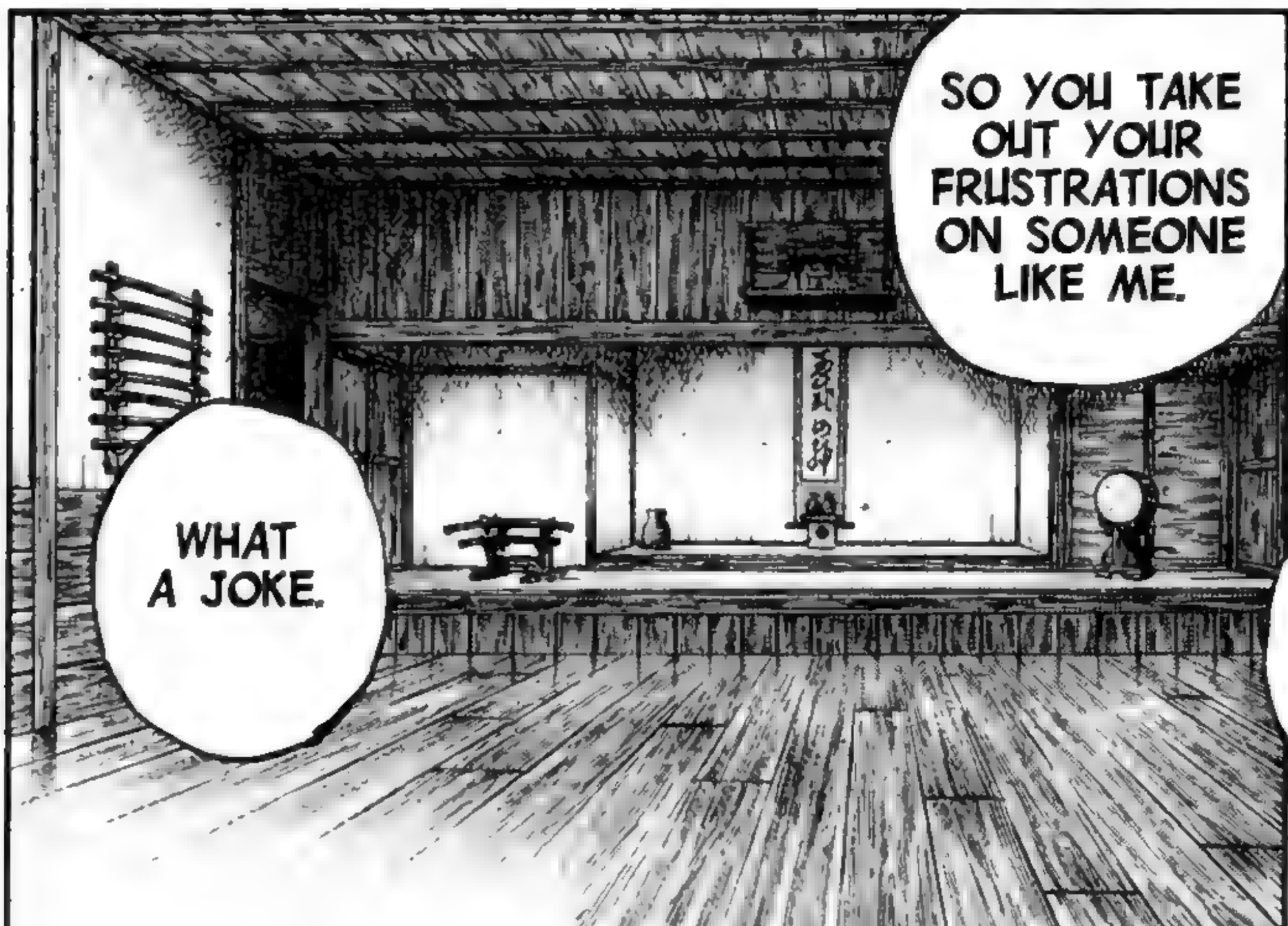
...

HUF

...?

HUF
HUF
YOU...
...THINK YOU CAN LAUGH AT ME?


ARE YOU REALLY ALL THAT DIFFERENT FROM ME?
INSTEAD OF WITNESSING THE GREAT DUEL, YOU GUYS HAVE TO GUARD ME.
YOU MUST BE THE LOWEST OF THE LOW IN THE YOSHIOKA.


SO YOU TAKE OUT YOUR FRUSTRATIONS ON SOMEONE LIKE ME.
WHAT A JOKE.

TOO OLD TO FULFILL ANY DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE.

PARASITES OF THE MEN THEY SERVE UNDER.

MOST SAMURAI JUST BUZZ AROUND LIKE FLIES.

THWAK

YOU TALK TOO MUCH...

...

WHAT!?

YOU MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE GREAT YOSHIOKA SCHOOL, BUT YOU'RE THE LOWEST RANKING HERE. YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN A BUG ON THE WALL.

FEW ARE GREAT MEN.

THAT'S HOW MOST SAMURAI ARE...

THOK

UNGH

THWAK

ARGH

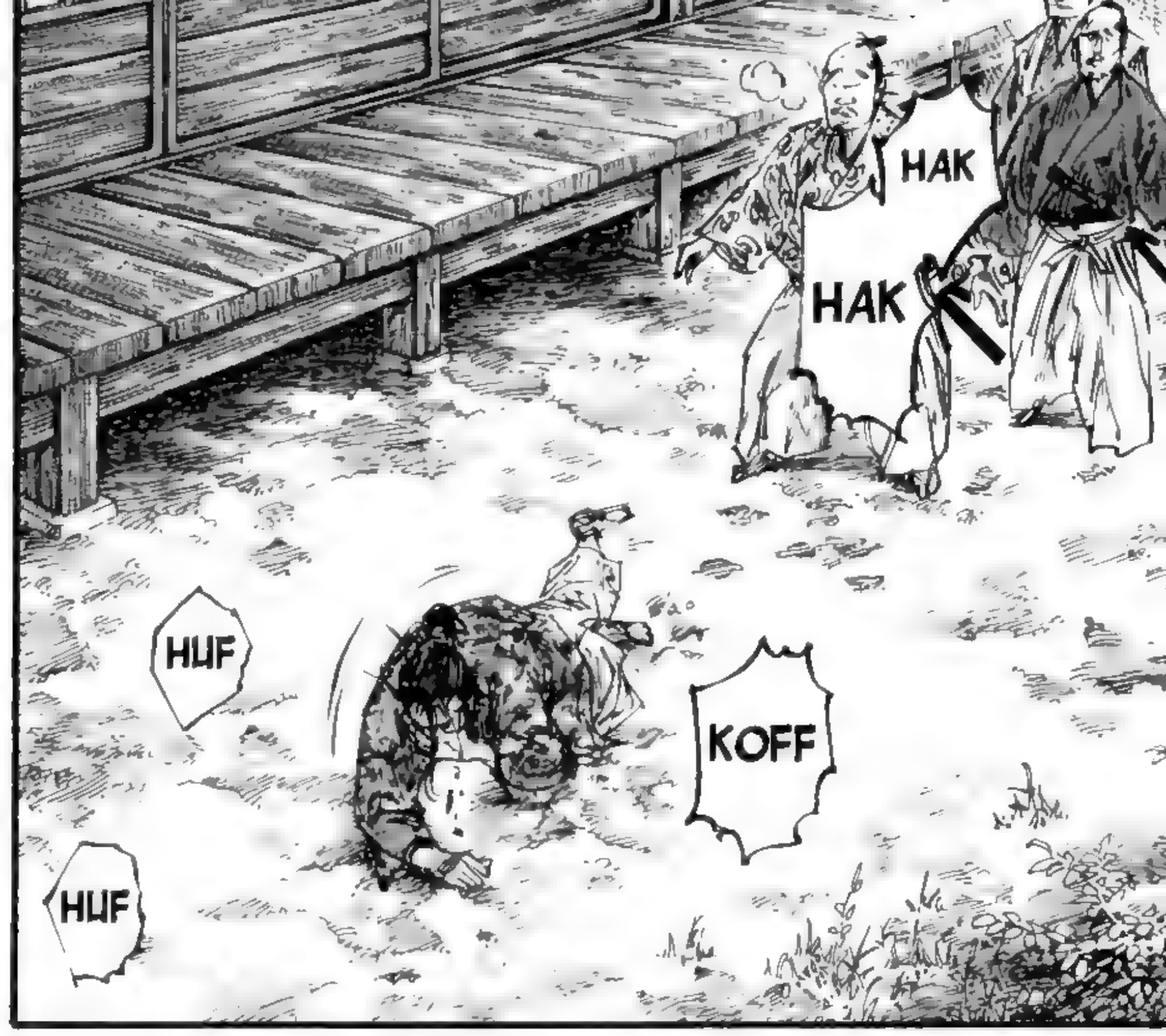
YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN ME...

YOU GUYS...

...

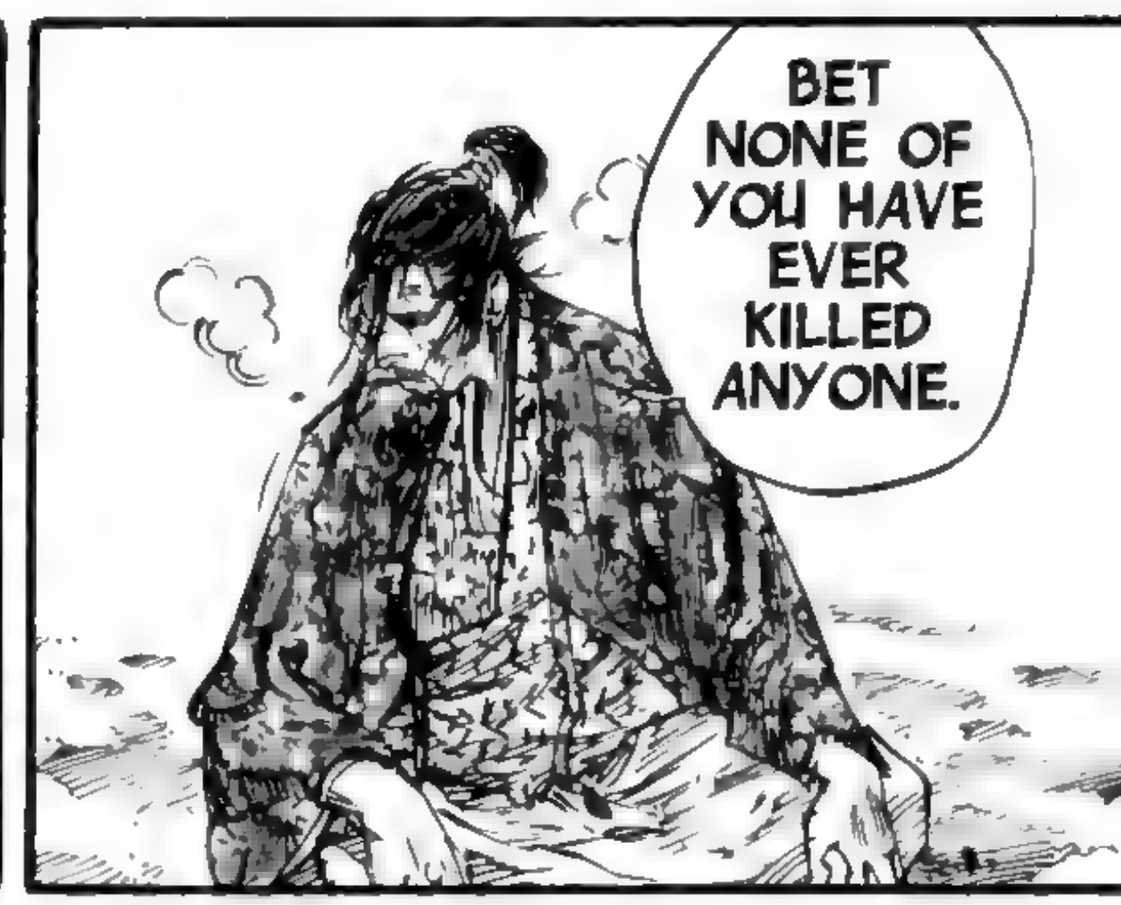
WHAT ?

THREE LITTLE FLIES...
HAK
SHUT UP!


HAK
HAK
HUF
HUF
KOFF

...

HUH?


BET NONE OF YOU HAVE EVER KILLED ANYONE.

SEVEN.

...!!

I FOUGHT ON THE LOSING SIDE OF SEKIGAHARA ...
...BUT I MANAGED TO KILL SEVEN MEN...

THEN AT A SKIRMISH AT A GAMBLING HALL, I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO CUT DOWN SEVERAL MEN.

ACTUALLY, IT WAS ONLY ONE MAN.

I WAS 17.

ACTUALLY, IT WAS ONLY FOUR MEN.

SO HOW ABOUT IT?

I WAS BORN OF A VIOLENT NATURE.

I ALWAYS HAVE TO RESORT TO THE SWORD.

SWAK
UNGH ...
TMP !!
YOUR ONLY TALENT IS LYING. I'M SURE YOU'VE NEVER KILLED ANYONE AT ALL!
YOU'RE UNARMED!
WE HAVE YOUR SWORD, IDIOT!

THWAK
THWAK

WE WERE TOLD WE COULD DO AS WE PLEASE WITH YOU.
AND YOU'RE RIGHT!
WE'RE ALWAYS PUSHED AROUND AT THE SCHOOL, SO WE ARE TAKING OUT OUR FRUSTRATIONS ON YOU.
ARGH ...
URRGH...
I'M GOING TO DIE...
SO IRRITATING! I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF YOU!
YOU'RE PATHETIC!
THWOK

NNGH!

BASH!

THAT'S WHY WE'RE REALLY GOING TO ENJOY THIS.

...THEY'LL SNUFF ME OUT LIKE AN ANT ...!!

THESE BASTARDS ARE GOING TO KILL ME...

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL ME...

TAKEZŌ...

SNOWING AGAIN...
...
SHF

HE'S OVER-CONFIDENT NOW THAT HE'S BEATEN SEIJŪRŌ!

HE'S NOT MENTALLY PREPARED FOR THIS MATCH!

HE'S NOT FILLED WITH BATTLE LUST LIKE HE WAS A YEAR AGO.

AND LOOK AT THE SILLY EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE!

IS THAT REALLY MUSASHI ...?

MUSASHI IS NOT TO BE FEARED...!!

DENSHICHIRŌ SENSEI!!

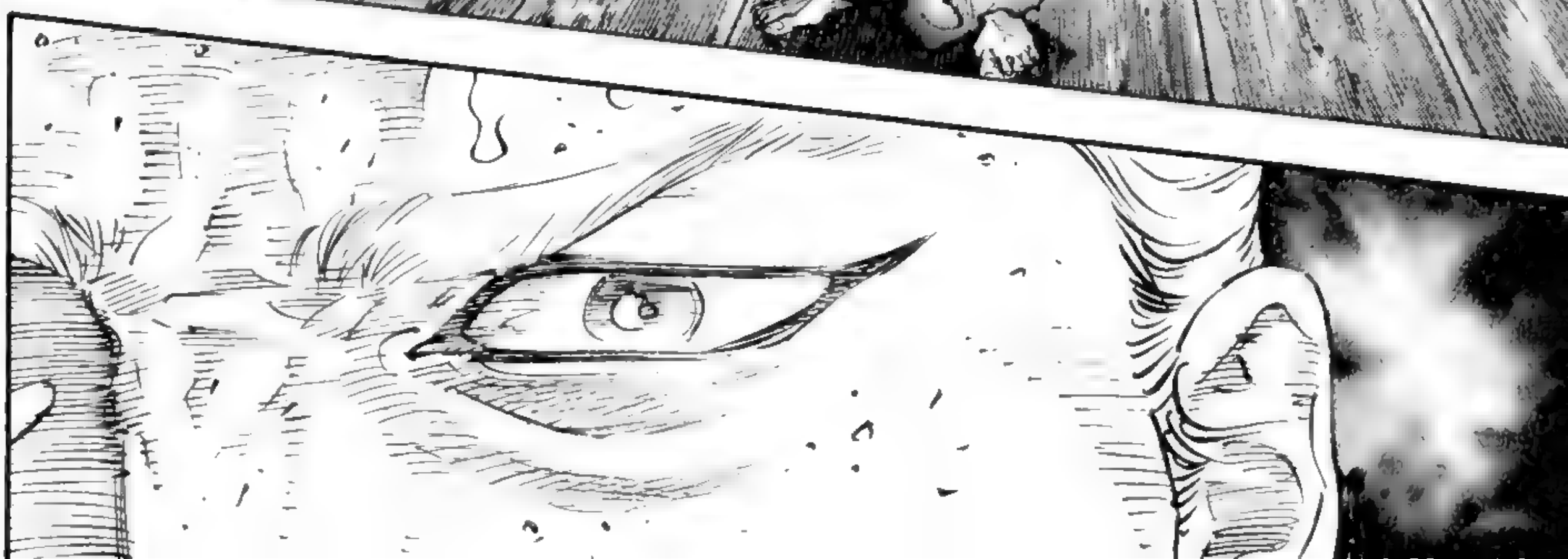
LACK OF RESPECT TOWARDS ONE'S OPPONENT IS A MAJOR WEAKNESS.

AN OPPOR-TUNITY FOR US!

I'VE ENCOUN-TERED IT MANY TIMES...!

SUCH... LOOSE-NESS...
HE'S LOOSE, BUT STILL HAS SUB-STANCE.

.....



I SEE...

YES...

NOW I CAN ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THIS MAN CUT DOWN MY BROTHER!

...

...
SHWP

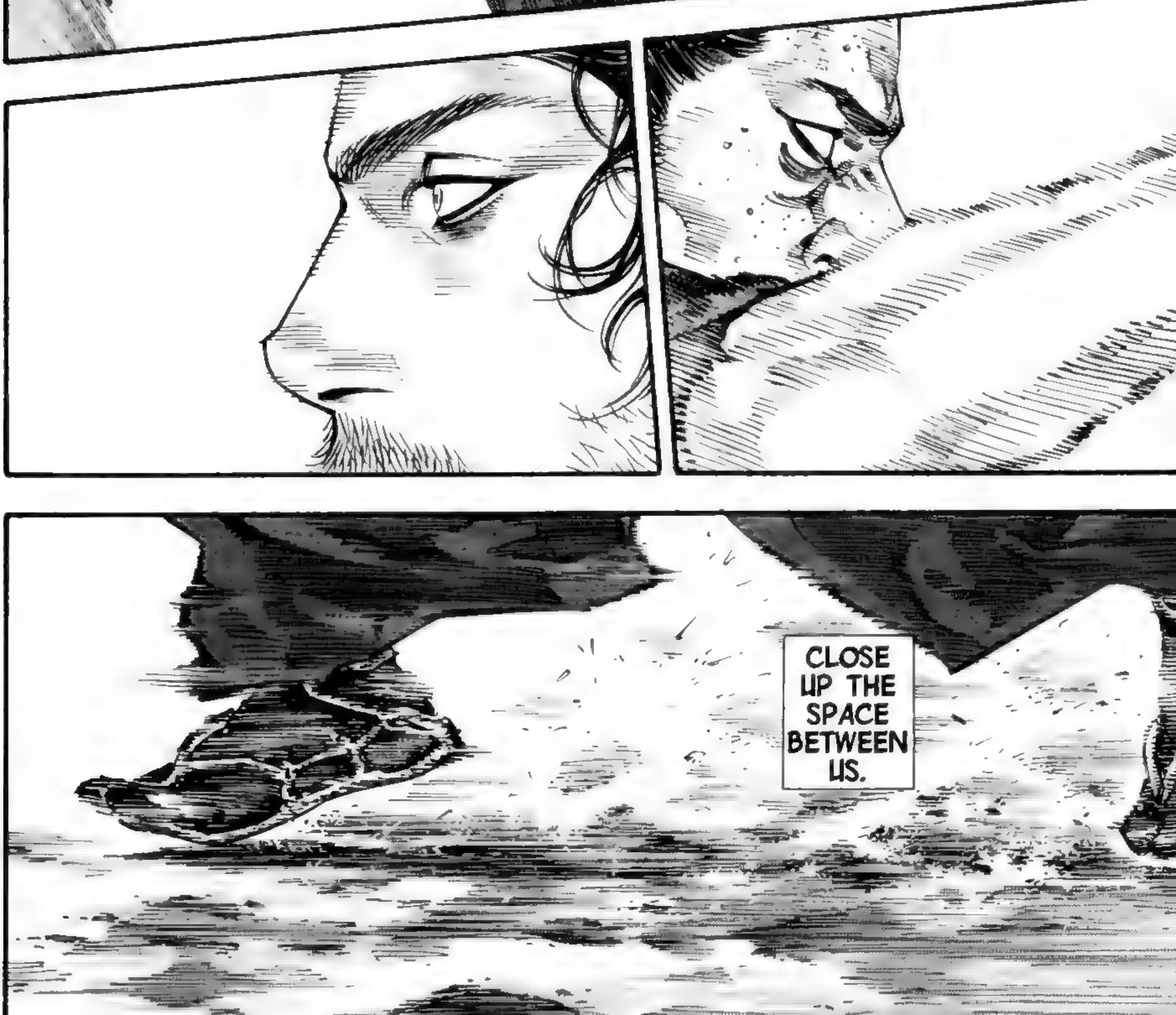
Vagabond

(HOW CAN YOU GUYS LAUGH AT ME?)

YAHH!

#215 | It's Already Begun

HAH!



NO...

USE THE SHORT SWORD.

THE LONG SWORD WOULD WORK JUST AS WELL.

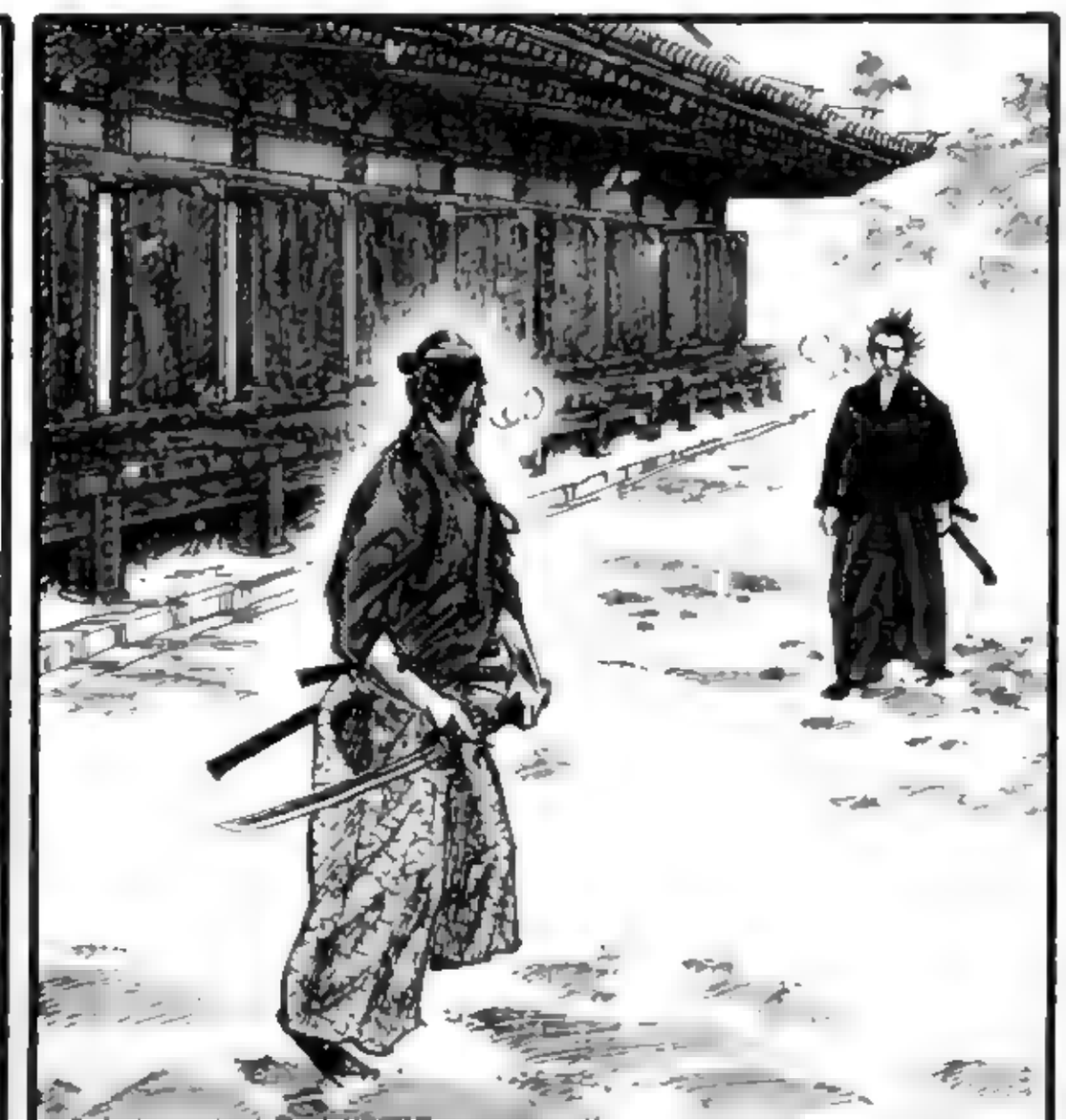
THMP
THMP
BRR...
.....
THE MIGHTY RAISED STANCE.
WITH THAT INTIMIDATING PHYSIQUE OF DENSHICHIRŌ SENSEI STANDING BEFORE YOU...
MOST WOULD LOSE THE WILL TO FIGHT!

FICH

...
FWOM
FWOM

WHAT!?
HUH?

DRAW!

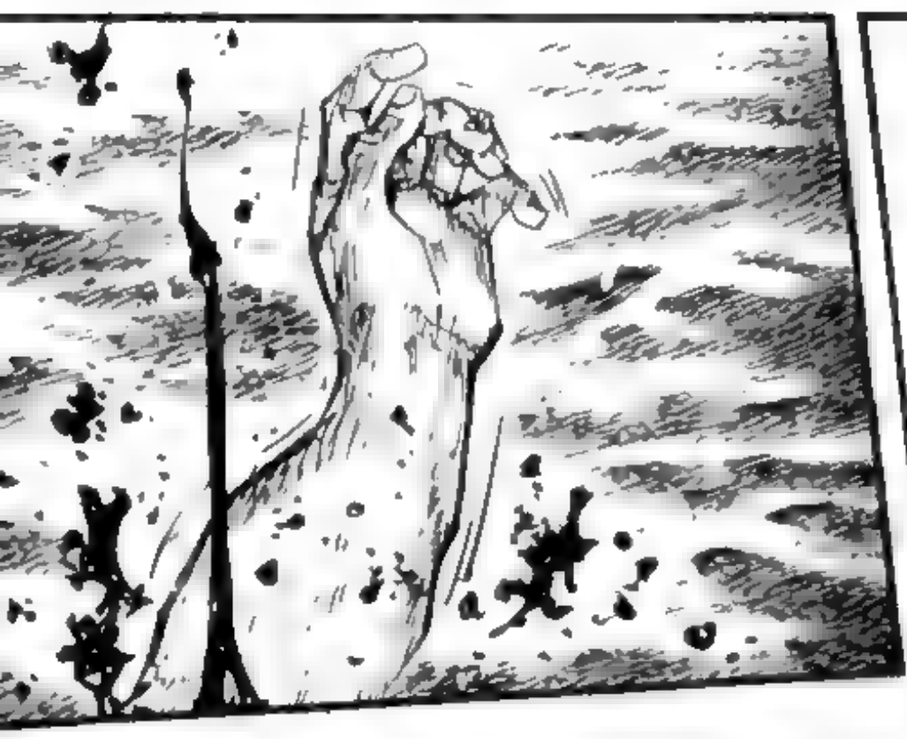


HE MUST HAVE SENSED SOME-THING.
HE CHANGED HIS STANCE TO PREVENT MUSASHI FROM CLOSING IN.

DRAW YOUR SWORD, MUSASHI.

FWOM

FWOM



DRAW!

...LIKE THIS.

WHEN ARE THEY GOING TO START?

MRRMRR

HEY.

FICH

MRRMRR

I'LL DO THIS...

HUH?

IT'S ALREADY BEGUN!

CHATTER

C'MON!

START ALREADY!

CHATTER

SHH! BE QUIET!

FICH

FWOM

FWOM

LIKE THIS.

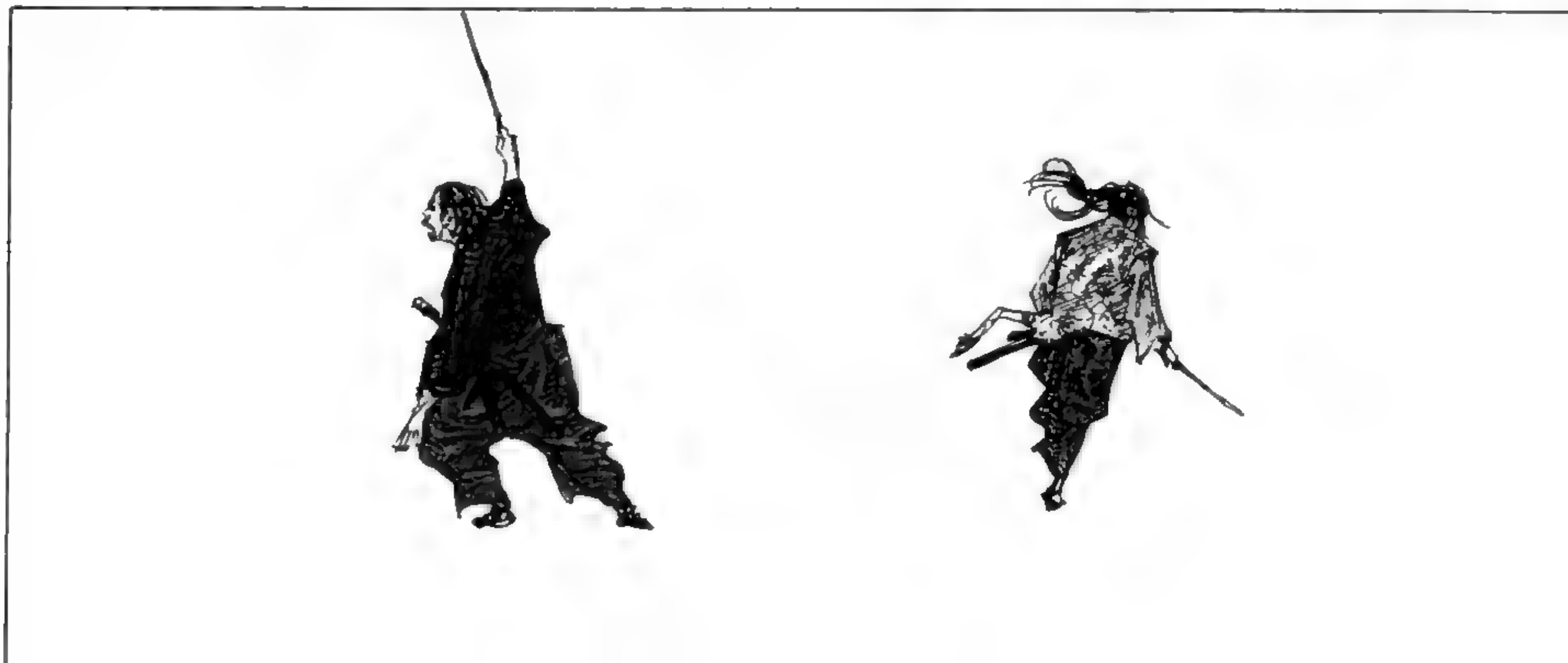
FWICH

AHH!

AUHH!

THE GRUFF VOICE WHICH BELIED THAT BOYISH FACE...

IT STILL ECHOED INSIDE MUSASHI'S HEAD.



.....

FWISH

FICH

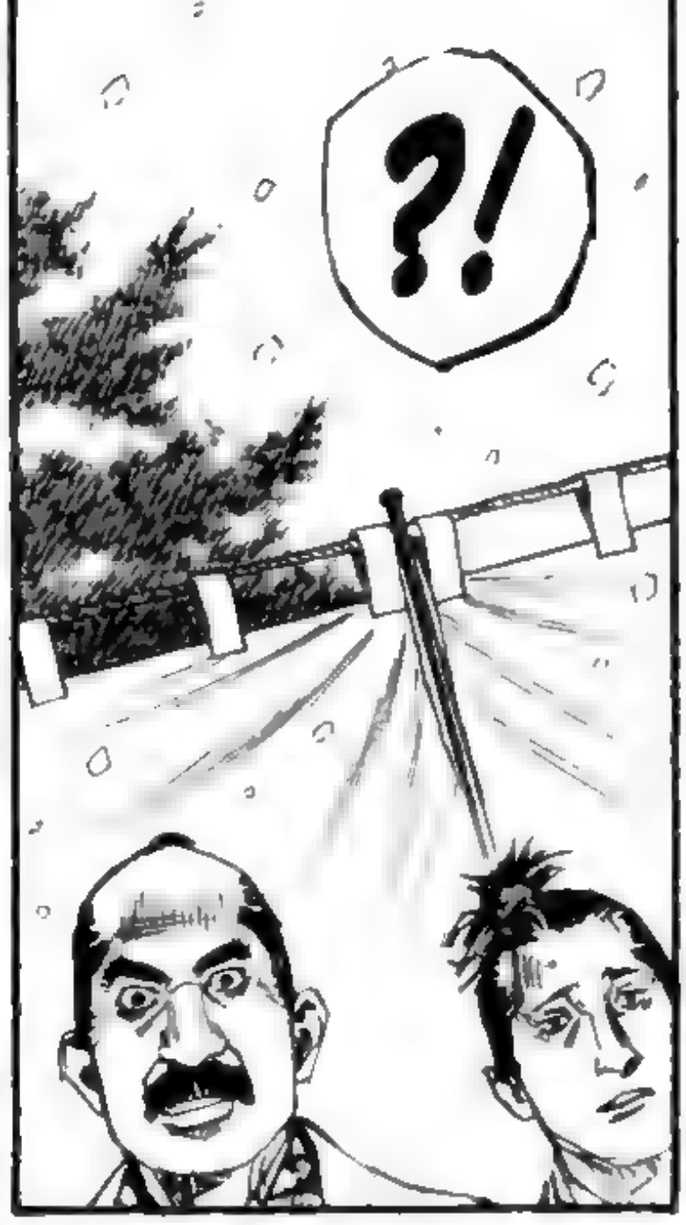
TUMP

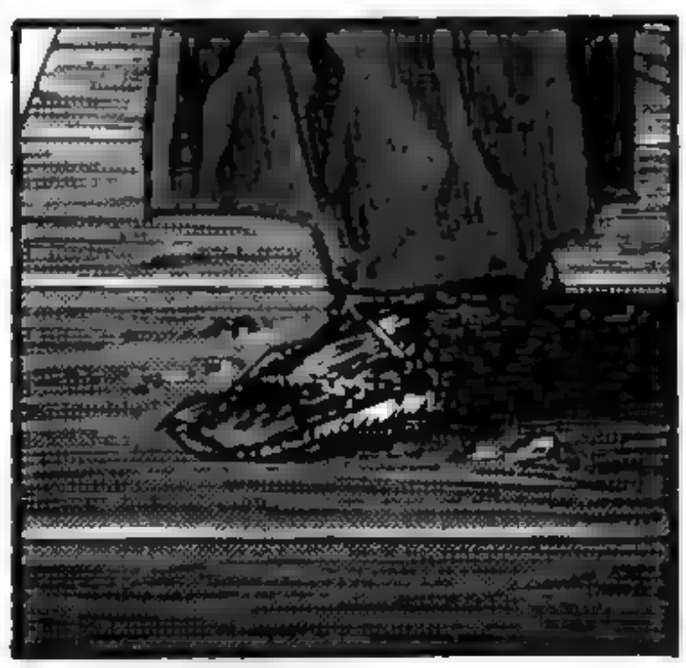
SHOVE

WHOOSH

?!

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF





MY MISTAKE...

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Critically acclaimed, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts Award for manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka Award for best manga, and in 2003, Inoue was nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords simultaneously—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY*, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this manga are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

A Brief Historical Overview
The *Sengoku* (warring states) period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weak and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating a federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its 5-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years. The political stability that resulted put mass numbers of samurai out of work. Masterless samurai, known as *ronin*, were forced to wander the land to seek out employment. This, the beginning of the Edo Period (1600-1868), set the stage for many of the period dramas and *chambara* sword-fighting films that have popularized the image of the samurai to a Western audience.

Hon'ami Koetsu (1558-1637)
Famed artist and calligrapher who co-founded an influential arts movement called the Rinpa School. Koetsu was involved in numerous fields including tea ceremony, pottery, and calligraphy. In addition, Koetsu succeeded the line of his family's ancestral business of sword polishing and appraisals.

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple, which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Rengeoin
Located in eastern Kyoto, Rengeoin Temple is more commonly referred to as Sanjusangendo. The main hall of Rengeoin features an amazing display of 1001 Kannon Buddhist statues.

Sasaki Kojiro (dates unknown)
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi, Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

Shinmen Takezo
Miyamoto Musashi's boyhood name.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND,* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons, who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

Vagabond

Winner of the 2000 Media Arts Festival Award
Recipient of the 2000 Kodansha Award for Best Manga
Winner of the 2002 Tezuka Osamu Cultural Award
Nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for Best Writer/Artist

"...reads like an Akira Kurosawa film captured on the printed page."
—Cliff Biggers, *Comics Buyer's Guide*

"...an extremely satisfying comics experience."
—Tony Isabella, *Comics Buyer's Guide*

"This really is one of the best comics currently being produced."
—Greg McElhatton, icomics.com

Striving for enlightenment by way of the sword, Miyamoto Musashi is prepared to cut down anyone who stands in his way. ***Vagabond*** depicts the life and times of the most celebrated samurai of all time!

On the eve of his duel with the leader of the great Yoshioka School, Musashi takes a step back to reflect upon his past in order to acquire a higher level of understanding and awareness. However, a chance encounter with deaf-mute swordsman Sasaki Kojiro provides an impromptu preview of what will become the greatest duel in the annals of Japanese history.

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